



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

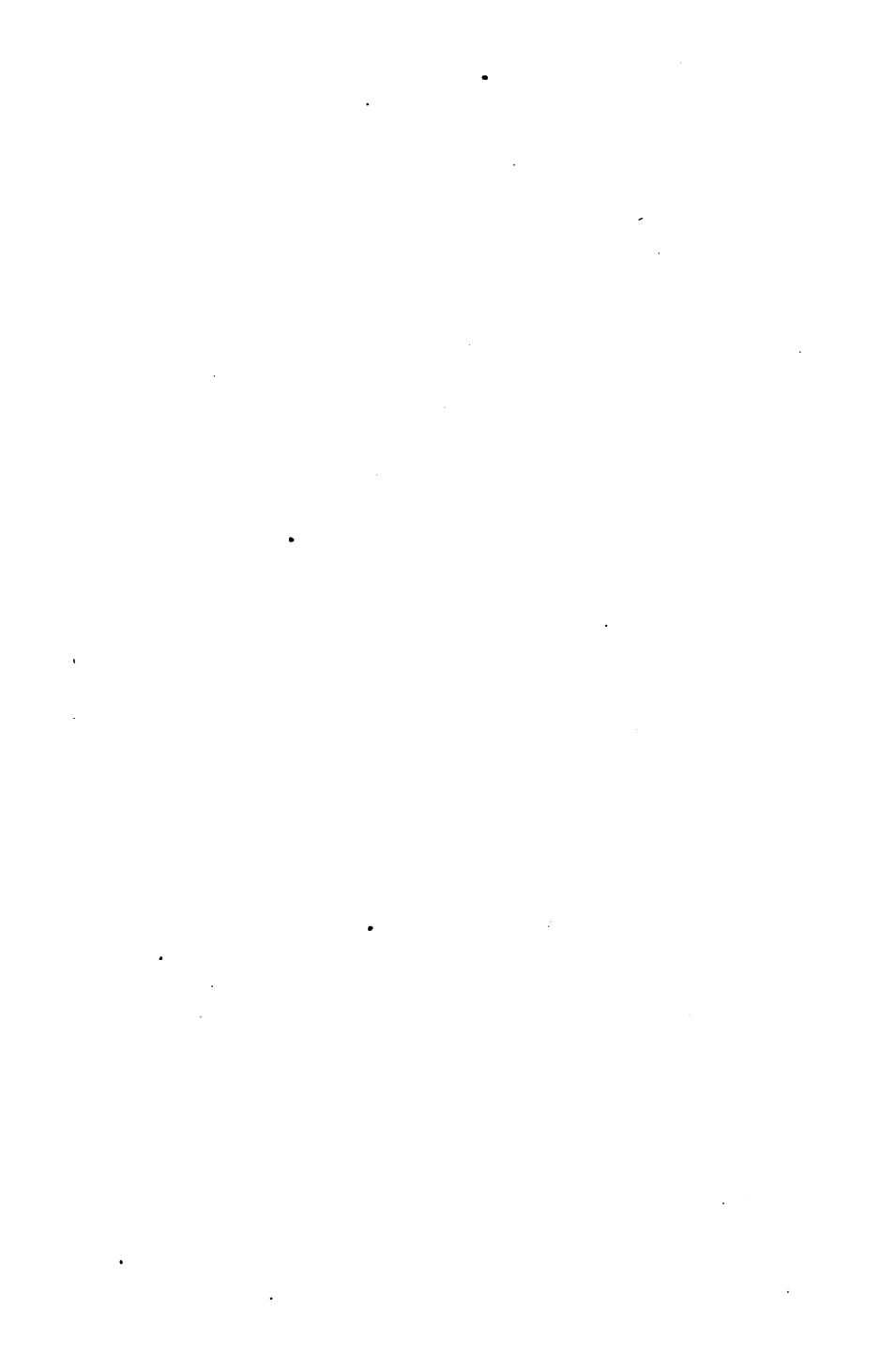
### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



---

ARRANGEMENT  
TIMAR'S TWO WORLDS



# TIMAR'S TWO WORLDS

BY  
MÓY MAURUS JÓKAI TATA

*AUTHORISED TRANSLATION*

BY

MRS HEGAN KENNARD

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. I.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS  
EDINBURGH AND LONDON  
MDCCCLXXXVIII

PH

3261

A663

v.1

201

## PREFACE.

---

HERR MAURUS JOKAI, the author of the present work, was born in Hungary in 1820, and in early life devoted himself entirely to painting, but afterwards abandoned it in favour of literature, in which he has attained great eminence, both as the editor of political journals and as the writer of very numerous novels. But although he has been called by his admirers "the Victor Hugo of the <sup>Hungarian</sup> German tongue," his works have not, in England, met with the appreciation they deserve; and it is in the hope of sharing with others the interest felt by herself that this translation has been undertaken by

A. H. K.





## CONTENTS OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

---

### BOOK FIRST.

#### THE ST BARBARA.

CHAP.	PAGE
I. THE IRON GATE, . . . . .	3
II. THE WHITE CAT, . . . . .	31
III. A DANGEROUS LEAP WITH A MAMMOTH, . . . . .	40
IV. A STRICT SEARCH, . . . . .	56
V. THE OWNERLESS ISLAND, . . . . .	72
VI. ALMIRA AND NARCISSA, . . . . .	89
VII. THE VOICES OF THE NIGHT, . . . . .	112
VIII. THE HISTORY OF THE ISLANDERS, . . . . .	130
IX. ALI TSCHORBADSCI, . . . . .	155
X. THE LIVING STATUE, . . . . .	165
XI. A BURIAL AT SEA, . . . . .	170
XII. AN EXCELLENT JOKE, . . . . .	180
XIII. THE FATE OF THE ST BARBARA, . . . . .	187
XIV. THE GUARDIAN, . . . . .	199

## BOOK SECOND.

## TIMÉA.

I. GOOD ADVICE, . . . . .	225
II. THE RED CRESCENT, . . . . .	236
III. THE GOLD MINE, . . . . .	247
IV. MICHAEL TIMAR, BARON VON LEVETINCZY, . . . . .	266
V. A GIRL'S HEART, . . . . .	282

# BOOK FIRST

THE ST BARBARA



# TIMAR'S TWO WORLDS.

---

## CHAPTER I.

### THE IRON GATE.

A MOUNTAIN-CHAIN, pierced through from base to summit—a gorge four miles in length walled in by lofty precipices; between their dizzy heights the giant stream of the Old World—the Danube.

Did the pressure of this mass of water force a passage for itself, or was the rock riven by subterranean fire? Did Neptune or Vulcan, or both together, execute this supernatural work, which the iron-clad hand of man scarce can emulate in these days of competition with divine achievements?

Of the rule of the one deity traces are visible on the heights of Fruska Gora in the fossil sea-shells strewn around, and in Veterani's cave with its petrified relics of saurian monsters of the deep ; of the other god, the basalt of Piatra Detonata bears witness. While the man of the iron hand is revealed by long galleries hewn in the rock, a vaulted road, the ruined piers of an immense bridge, the tablets sculptured in bas-relief on the face of the cliff, and by a channel two hundred feet wide, hollowed in the bed of the river, through which the largest ships may pass.

The Iron Gate has a history of two thousand years. Four nations, Romans, Turks, Roumanians, and Hungarians, have each in turn given it a different name.

We seem to approach a temple built by giants, with rocky pillars, towering columns, and wonderful colossi on its lofty frieze, stretching out in a perspective of four miles, and, as it winds, discovering new domes with other groups of natural masonry, and other wondrous forms. One wall is smooth as polished granite, red

and white veins zigzagging across it like mysterious characters in the handwriting of God ; in another place the whole face is rusty brown, as if of solid iron ; here and there the oblique strata suggest the daring architecture of the Titans. At the next turn we are met by the portal of a Gothic cathedral, with its pointed gables, its clustered basaltic columns ; out of the dingy wall shines now and again a golden speck like a glimpse of the Ark of the Covenant—there sulphur blooms, the ore-flower. But living blossoms also deck the crags ; from the crevices of the cornice hang green festoons. These are great foliage-trees and pines, whose dark masses are interspersed with frost-flecked garlands of red and gold.

Now and then the mouth of some valley makes a break in the endless, dizzy precipice, and allows a peep into a hidden paradise untrodden by man.

Here between two cliffs lies a deep shadow, and into this twilight shines like a fairy world the picture of a sunny vale, with a forest of wild vines, whose small red clusters lend colour

to the trees, and whose bright leaves weave a carpet below. No human dwelling is visible; a clear stream winds along, from which deer drink fearlessly; then the brook throws its silver ribbon over the edge of the cliff. Thousands pass by the valley, and each one asks himself who lives there.

Then follows another temple, more huge and awful than the first; the towering walls drawing closer by three hundred yards and soaring three thousand feet into the sky.

That projecting needle at the top is the "Gropa lui Petro," the grave of St Peter; the two gigantic forms on either side are his apostolic companions; yonder monster opposite is the "Babile," and the one which closes the vista is the "Golumbaczka Mali" or Dove-rock; while the grey pinnacle which towers above is the high Robber's Peak, "Rasbojnik Beliki."

Between these walls flows the Danube in its rocky bed. The mighty mother-stream, accustomed far above on the Hungarian plains to flow with majestic quiet in a bed three miles wide, to caress the overhanging willows,



to look on blooming meadows and play with chattering mills, is here confined in a pass only a hundred and fifty fathoms in width.

With what rage it rushes through ! He who travelled with it before recognises it no longer ; the grisly giant is rejuvenated into heroic youth. Its waves leap along the stony bed, from which sometimes a great boulder projects like a witch's altar, the huge "Babagay," the crowned "Kassan." On this it bursts with majestic fury, roaring round it with swirls which hollow deep abysses in the bottom ; thence it rushes, hissing and seething, across the slabs of rock which stretch obliquely from side to side of the channel. In many places it has already mastered the obstacles which barred its way, and flows foaming through the open breach. There, it has burrowed beneath the wall of the ravine, and by its continuous current has washed out a channel below the overhanging rock. Here, it has carved islands out of the stubborn granite, new creations, to be found on no chart, overgrown with wild bushes. They belong to no State—neither Hungary, Turkey, nor

Servia; they are ownerless, nameless, subject to no tribute, outside the world. And there again it has carried away an island, with all its shrubs, trees, huts, and wiped it from the map.

The rocks and islets divide the stream, which between Ogradina and Plesvissovicza has a speed of ten miles an hour, into many arms; and the sailor has need to study these intricate and narrow passages, for there is but one deep-water channel through the rocky bed—in-shore none but the smallest boats can float.

Among the small islands between the lesser branches of the Danube, singular constructions of human hands are mingled with the grand works of nature; double rows of palisades made of strong trunks of trees, which, joined in the form of a V, present their open side down stream. These are the sturgeon-traps. The marine visitors swim up stream into the snare, and on and on into the ever-narrowing trap—for it is not their custom to turn back—until they find themselves in the death-chamber from which there is no release.

The voices of this sublime region are super-

human. A perpetual universal tumult; so monotonous, so nearly akin to silence and yet so distinct—as if it uttered the name of God. How the great river dances over the granite shores, how it scourges the rocky walls, bounds against the island-altars, dives rattling into the whirlpool, pervades the cataract with harmony!

The echo from the mighty cliffs raises this eternal voice of the waters into an unearthly melody, like organ-notes and thunder dying away. Man is silent, as if afraid to hear his own language amidst this song of the Titans: sailors communicate by signs, and the fishermen's superstition forbids talking here under a penalty. The consciousness of danger impels all to silent prayer.

At any time the passage between these dark precipices, towering on either hand, might give the sensation of being ferried along under the walls of one's own tomb; but what must it be when that supreme terror of the sailor, the Bora, sweeps down! A continuous and ever-increasing gale, which at certain seasons makes the Iron Gate impassable.

If there were only one cliff it would be a protection from the wind; but the draught of air confined between the two is as capricious as the wind in the streets of a town; at each corner it takes a new departure: now it stops suddenly, then bursts out of a corner as from an ambush, seizes the ship, carries away the steering-gear, throws the whole towing-team into the water, then shifts again, and drives the wooden vessel before it as though it were going down-stream—the water throwing up clouds of spray as blinding and fine as the sand of the desert in a simoom.

At such times the sighing church-music of the gale swells to the thunder of the Last Judgment, in which is mingled the death-cry of departing spirits.

At the time to which this history refers there were no steamers on the Danube. Between Galatz and the junction with the Main, over nine thousand horses were employed in towing ships up-stream; on the Turkish Danube sails were also used, but not on the Hungarian branch. Besides these a whole fleet of smug-

glers' boats traded between the two countries, propelled only by strong arms. Salt-smuggling was in full swing. On the Turkish side the same salt was sold for five gulden, which cost six and a half on the Hungarian shore. It was brought by contraband back from Turkey to Hungary, and sold here for five and a half gulden. So every one profited by this comfortable arrangement.

The only one not satisfied was the Government, which for its own protection established custom-houses along the frontier, in which the male population of the neighbouring villages had to keep guard armed with guns. Each village supplied watchmen, and each village had its own smugglers. While the young men of the place were on guard, the old ones carried the salt, and so both trades were kept in the family. But the Government had another important object in its strict watch on the frontier—security from the plague.

The terrible Eastern plague!

In these days we know nothing of it, for it is a hundred and fifty years since a vain widow

in Semlin brought an infected shawl, and fell dead as she went to church in it. But we have to thank the regulations which shut the door against it for this immunity. For each contact with a new people has endowed us with a new disease. From China we received scarlet fever, from the Saracens small-pox, from Russia influenza, from South America yellow fever, and from the Hindoos cholera. But the plague comes from Turkey.

Therefore, along the whole bank, the opposite neighbours can only communicate with each other on condition of observing strict preventive measures, which must add considerable interest to their daily life.

If the plague breaks out in Brussa, everything living or dead is officially declared infected: whoever has been in contact with it comes under the same ban, and must be in quarantine for ten or twenty days. If the cable of a left-bank ship touches the cable of a right-bank vessel, the whole crew of the former is unclean, and she must lie for ten days in the middle of the stream; for the

plague might pass along the ropes from one to the other, and be communicated to the whole crew.

And all this is carefully watched. On each ship sits an official called a "purifier." A terrible person, whose duty it is to keep an eye on every one, what he handles, what touches him; and if a passenger has been in contact with any person, or any material of hair, wool, or hemp on the Turkish side (for these substances carry infection), even with the hem of his garment, the health-officer must declare him under suspicion, and on arrival at Orsova must drag him from the arms of his family and deliver him over to quarantine.

Woe to the purifier if he should conceal a case. For the slightest neglect, fifteen years' imprisonment is the penalty.

It would appear, however, that smugglers are not liable to the plague, for they have no purifier on board, and if the disease should break out a hundred times over in Brussa, they would still ply day and night between the two banks. We must remember, however, that St Procopius

is their patron. Only the Bora disturbs their retail trade ; for the swift current through the Iron Gate drives the rowing-boats towards the southern shore. Of course smuggling is done by tow-boats too, but that belongs to wholesale traffic, costs more than friendly business, and so is not for poor people : in them not only salt, but also tobacco and coffee are smuggled across the frontier.

The Bora has swept the Danube clear of vessels, and has thereby so raised public morality and obedience to law, that for the last few days there has been no occasion for forgiveness of sins. Every vessel has hastened into harbour, or cast anchor in mid-stream, and the watchmen can sleep in peace as long as this wind makes the joints of their wooden huts creak. No ship can travel now, and yet the corporal of the Ogradina watch-house has a fancy that ever since daybreak, amidst the blustering wind and roaring waters, he can detect the peculiar signal tones which the speaking-trumpet sends for many miles, and which are not drowned even by the voice of the thunder ; the haunting,



mournful blasts which issue from the long wooden tube.

Is some vessel declaring its approach, so that no other ship may meet it in such weather in the narrow channel of the Iron Gate? Or is it in danger and calling for help?

This ship approaches.

It is an oaken vessel of ten to twelve thousand measures burden: deeply laden it would appear, for the waves wash over the bulwarks on each side.

The massive hull is painted black, with a white bow, which ends in a long upstanding spiral beak plated with shining tin. The upper deck is shaped like a roof, with narrow steps up to it, and a flat bridge leading from one side to the other. The forward part of the raised deck ends in a double cabin, containing two rooms, with doors to right and left. The third wall of the cabin shows two small windows with green painted shutters, and in the space between them the maidenly form of the martyred St Barbara is painted on a gold ground, with a pink dress, light-blue mantle, red head-dress, and a white lily in her hand.

In the small space between the cabins and the thick coils of rope on the prow of the ship, stands a long green wooden trough filled with earth, in which lovely blooming carnations and stocks are planted. A three-foot iron railing shuts in the little garden, and on its spikes hang garlands of wild flowers. In the middle burns a lamp in a red glass globe, near to which is a bundle of dried rosemary and consecrated willow-catkins.

On the forepart of the vessel stands the mast, to whose centre rings the tow-rope is attached ; a three-inch cable, by which thirty-two horses on the bank are trying to move the heavy ship up-stream. At other times sixteen horses would have sufficed here, and on the upper reaches twelve would be enough, but in this part and against such a wind even the thirty-two find it hard work. The horn signals are for the leader of the team-drivers ; the human voice would be powerless here : even if the call reached the shore, no one could understand it amidst the confused echoes.

But the language of the horn is intelligible

even to horses; from its now drawling, now abrupt, warning, or encouraging tones, man and beast understand when to hasten or slacken their speed, or when to stop altogether.

For in this narrow ravine the lot of the vessel is very uncertain: it has to struggle with gusts of furious wind, variable currents, its own weight, and the rocks and whirlpool which must be avoided. Its fate lies in the hands of two men. One is the pilot who steers; the other is the captain, who amidst the roar of the elements signals his orders to the towing-team by blasts on the horn. If the signal is misunderstood the ship either runs on to a rock, glides into the rapids, goes to pieces on the southern shore, or strands on some newly formed sand-bank, and sinks with every soul on board.

The steersman is a six-foot weather-beaten sailor with a very red face, whose colour on both cheeks comes from a network of veins with which the white of the eye is also transfused. He is always hoarse, and his voice knows only two variations, either a loud bellow

or a low growl. Probably this is what obliges him to take double care of his throat. Prevention by means of a red comforter tightly wound round his neck, and cure by means of a brandy-flask occupying a permanent position in his coat pocket.

The captain is a man of about thirty, with fair hair, dreamy blue eyes, and a long moustache, the rest of his face clean shaven. He is of middle height, and gives an idea of delicacy: with this impression his voice accords, for when he speaks softly it is like a woman's.

The steersman is called Johann Fabula; the name of the captain is Michael Timar.

The official "purifier" sits on the edge of the rudder bench; he has drawn a hood over his head, so that only his nose and moustache appear: both are red. History has not recorded his name. At present he is chewing tobacco.

One of the ship's boats, manned by six rowers, has taken out a line from the bow, and the united efforts of the oarsmen materially assist the towing of the vessel.

At the door of the double cabin sits a man of fifty, smoking a Turkish chibouque. His features are oriental, with more of the Turkish than the Greek type; his dress, with the striped kaftan and red fez, is like that of a Servian or Greek. It will not escape an attentive observer that the shaven part of his face is light in contrast to the rest, which is the case with a person who has lately removed a thick beard. This is Euthemio Trikaliss, under which name he appears in the way-book. He is the owner of the cargo, but the ship itself belongs to a merchant of Komorn called Athanasius Brazovics.

Out of one of the cabin windows looks the face of a young girl, and so becomes a neighbour of St Barbara. One might fancy it was another sacred picture. The face is not pale but white—the inherent whiteness of marble or natural crystal. As an Abyssinian is born black, and a Malay yellow, so is this girl born white. No other tint disturbs the delicate snow; on this face neither the breath of the wind nor the eye of man calls up a blush. She is certainly only

a child, hardly more than thirteen; but her figure is tall and slender, her face calm as if hewn out of alabaster, with severely antique lines, as if her mother had looked always at the Venus of Milo. Her thick black hair has a metallic gleam like the plumage of the black swan; but her eyes are dark-blue. The long delicate eyebrows almost meet over the brow, which gives her face a curious charm; it is as if these arching brows formed a black aureole round the brow of a saint.

The girl's name is Timéa.

These are the passengers of the St Barbara.

When the captain lays his speaking-trumpet aside, and has tried with the lead what water the ship has under her, he has time to chat with the girl as he leans against the iron railing round the picture.

Timéa understands only modern Greek, which the captain can speak fluently. He points out to her the beauties of the scenery, its grim, cruel beauties: the white face, the dark-blue eyes, remain unchanged, and yet the girl listens with fixed attention.

But it seems to the captain as if these eyes gave their thoughts not so much to him as to the stocks which grow at St Barbara's feet. He breaks off one and gives it to the child, that she may listen to what the flowers tell.

The steersman sees this, away there by the tiller, and it displeases him. "You would do better," he growls in a voice like the rasping of a file, "instead of plucking the saint's flowers for that child, to burn a holy willow-wand at the lamp, for if the Lord drives us on to these stone monsters, even His own Son won't save us. Help, Jesu!"

This aspiration would have been uttered by Johann Fabula, even if he were alone; but as the purifier sat close by, there followed this dialogue.

"Why must the gentry pass the Iron Gate in such a storm?"

"Why?" answered Johann Fabula, who did not forget his laudable habit of aiding the collection of his thoughts by a gulp out of the wicker brandy-flask. "Why? For no other reason but being in a hurry. Ten thousand

measures of wheat are in our hold. In the Banat the crops failed; in Wallachia there was a good harvest. This is Michaelmas; if we don't make haste, November will be upon us, and we shall be frozen in."

"And why do you think the Danube will freeze in November?"

"I don't think—I know. The Komorn calendar says so. Look in my berth, it hangs by my bed."

The purifier buried his nose in his hood, and spat his tobacco juice into the Danube.

"Don't spit into the water in such weather as this,—the Danube won't bear it. But what the Komorn calendar says is as true as Gospel. Ten years ago it prophesied that frost would set in in November; so I started at once to get home with my ship—then too I was in the St Barbara—the others laughed at me. But on the 23d of November cold set in, and half the vessels were frozen in, some at Apathin, and others at Foldvar. Then it was my turn to laugh. Help, Jesu! Hard over, he—e—e—!!"

The wind was now dead ahead. Thick drops



of sweat ran down the steersman's cheeks whilst he struggled to get the tiller over, but he asked for no help. Then he rewarded himself with a pull at his bottle, after which his eyes looked redder than ever.

"Now if the Lord will only help us to pass that stone pier," groaned he in the midst of his exertions. "Pull away, you fellows there! If only we can get by this point!"

"There's another beyond."

"Yes, and then a third, and a thirteenth, and we must keep our mass-money ready in our mouths, for we are walking over our open coffins all the time."

"Hark ye, my good friend," said the purifier, taking his plug out of his mouth, "I fancy your ship carries something besides wheat."

Master Fabula looked askance at the purifier under his hood, and shrugged his shoulders. "What's that to me? If there's contraband on the ship, at any rate we shan't stop in quarantine, and we shall get on pretty quick."

"How so?"

The steersman made a circle with his thumb

behind his back, on which the health-officer burst out laughing. Could he possibly have understood this pantomime?

“Now, look you,” said Johann Fabula, “since I was here last, the course of the river has altered; if I don’t let her go a bit free we shall get into the new eddy which has formed under the ‘Lover’s Rock.’ Do you see that devilish monster which keeps swimming close to us? That’s an old sturgeon—he must be at least five hundredweight. If this beast keeps up with us, he’ll bring us ill-luck. Help, Lord! If only he would come near enough for me to get the grappling-iron into him! The skipper is always sneaking up to the Greek girl instead of blowing his horn to the riders. She brings us misfortune—since she has been on board, we’ve had nothing but north wind; there’s something wrong about her—she’s as white as a ghost, and her eyebrows grow together like a witch’s. Herr Timar, blow to the teamsmen, ho—ho—ho!”

But Timar did not touch the horn, and went on telling legends of the rocks and waterfalls to the white maiden.

Beginning from the Iron Gate up to Clissera, each valley, each cave on both banks, every cliff, island, and every eddy in the stream has its history : a fairy tale, a legend, or an adventure with brigands, of which books, or sculptured inscriptions, or national songs, or fisherfolks' tradition tell the story. It is a library in stone : the names of the rocks are the lettered back of the volumes, and he who knows how to open them may read a romance therein.

Michael Timar had long been at home in this library. With the vessel committed to his charge he had often made the passage of the Iron Gate, and every stone and island was familiar to him.

Possibly he had another object with his legends and anecdotes besides the satisfaction of the girl's curiosity. When a highly-strung creature has to pass through a great danger, which makes even a strong man's heart quake, then those who know the danger try to turn the attention of the ignorant person into the kingdom of marvels. Was it perhaps thus ?

Timéa listened to the story of the hero Mirko

with his beloved, the faithful Milieva ; how they fled to the peaks of the Linbigaja Rock out in the Danube ; how there he alone defended the precipitous approach to his refuge, against all the soldiers of his pursuer Hassan ; how they lived on the kids brought by the eagles to their nest on the cliff, cared not for the roar of the breakers round the base of their island, and felt no fear of the white surges thrown up by the compressed force of the narrowed current. Mariners call these woolly wave-crests the "Lover's Goats."

"It would be better to look ahead than astern," growled the steersman, and then exerted his voice in a loud call, "Haha! ho! skipper, what's that coming down on us?"

The captain looked round, and saw the object pointed out by the pilot. The ship was now entering the Tatalia Pass, where the Danube is only two hundred fathoms wide, and has a rapid incline. It looks like a mountain torrent, only that this torrent is the Danube. And besides, the stream is here divided in two by a mass of rock whose top is covered with bushes :

the water forks in two arms on the western side, of which one shoots under the steep precipice of the Servian bank, whilst the other discharges through an artificial channel a hundred yards wide, by which the large vessels pass up and down. In this part it is far from desirable that two ships should meet, for there is barely room for them to pass in safety. To the northward lie hidden rocks where a ship might strike, and to the southward is the great whirlpool formed by the junction of the two branches; if this should seize a vessel, no human power could save her.

So that the danger which the steersman had announced by his question was a very real one.

Two ships meeting in the Tatalia Pass with the river so high and under such a pressure of wind!

Michael Timar asked for his telescope, which he had lent to Timéa to look at the place where Mirko had defended the beautiful Milieva.

At the western curve of the river a dark mass was visible in the stream.

Michael looked through his glass, and then called to the steersman, "A mill!"

"Holy Father! then we are lost."

A water-mill was driving down on them; probably the storm had loosened its chains from the bank. Obviously it was without pilot or oarsmen, who must have fled to the shore; so it drifted blindly on, sweeping away the mills it met on its way, and sinking any cargo-boats which could not get out of its road.

How could they escape between Scylla and Charybdis?

Timar said not a word of this to Timéa, but gave her back the glass, and told her where to look for the eagles' nest whose ancestors had fed the lovers. Then he threw off his coat hastily, sprang into the barge where the rowers were, and made five of them get into the small boat with him; they were to bring the light anchor and thin cable with them, and cast off.

Trikaliss and Timéa did not understand his orders, as he spoke Hungarian, which neither of them knew.

The captain shouted to the steersman, "Keep her steady; go ahead!" In a few moments Trikaliss also could see what was the danger. The drifting mill came floating swiftly down the brawling stream, and one could see with the naked eye the clattering paddle-wheel, whose width occupied the whole fairway of the channel. If it touched the laden ship both must go down.

The boat with the six men still struggled up against the current. Four of them rowed, one steered, and Timar stood in the bow with folded arms.

What was their insane design? What could they do in a little boat against a great mill? What are human mind and muscles against stream and storm?

If each were a Samson, the laws of hydrostatics would set at nought their strength. The shock with which they touch the mill will recoil on the skiff; if they grapple it they will be dragged away by it. It is as if a spider would catch a cockchafer in its web.

The boat, however, did not keep in the centre,

but tried to reach the southern point of the island.

So high were the waves that the five men disappeared again and again in the hollows between, then the next moment they danced on the foamy crest, tossed hither and thither by the wilful torrent, seething under them like boiling water.



## CHAPTER II.

## THE WHITE CAT.

THE five oarsmen consulted in the boat what was to be done.

One advised cutting through the side of the mill below the water-line with an axe, so as to sink it : but that would do no good ; the current would drive the wreck down on to the ship.

A second thought they ought to grapple the mill with hooks, and give it a list away, so as to direct it towards the whirlpool : but this counsel was also rejected, for the eddies would drag the boat down too.

Timar ordered the man at the tiller to keep straight for the point of the island where the Lover's Rock lies.

When they approached the rapids he lifted

the heavy anchor and swung it into the water without shaking the boat, which showed what muscular strength the delicate frame contained. The anchor took out a long coil of rope with it, for the water is deep there. Then Timar made them row as quickly as possible towards the approaching mill. Now they guessed his design—he meant to anchor the mill. Bad idea, said the sailors; the great mass will lie across the fairway, and stop the ship; besides the cable is so long and slight that the heavy fabric will part it easily.

When Euthemio Trikaliss saw from the vessel Timar's intention, he dropped his chibouque in a panic, ran along the deck and cried to the steersman to cut the tow-rope, and let the ship drift down-stream.

The pilot did not understand Greek, but guessed from the old man's gestures what he wanted.

With perfect calmness he answered as he leant against the rudder, "There's nothing to grumble at; Timar knows what to do." With the courage of despair Trikaliss drew his dagger

out of his girdle in order to cut the rope himself; but the steersman pointed towards the stern, and what Trikaliss saw there altered his mind.

From the Lower Danube came a vessel towards them: an accustomed eye can distinguish it from afar. It has a mast whose sails are furled, a high poop, and twenty-four rowers.

It is a Turkish brigantine.

As soon as he caught sight of it, Trikaliss put his dagger back in his sash; if he had turned purple at what he saw ahead, now he was livid. He hastened to Timéa, who was looking through the glass at the peaks of Perigrada. "Give me the telescope!" he exclaimed in a hoarse voice.

"Oh, how pretty that is!" said Timéa, as she gave up the glass.

"What?"

"On the cliffs there are little marmots playing together like monkeys."

Euthemio directed the telescope towards the approaching vessel, and his brows contracted; his face was pale as death.

Timéa took the glass from his hand and looked again for the marmots on the rocks. Euthemio kept his arm round her waist.

“How they jump and dance and chase each other; how amusing!” and Timéa little knew how near she was to being lifted by the arm that held her, and plunged over the bulwarks into the foaming flood.

But what Euthemio saw on the other side brought back into his face the colour it had lost.

When Timar arrived within a cast of the mill, he took a coil of the anchor-rope in his right hand; a hook was fastened to its end. The rudderless mass came quickly nearer, like some drifting antediluvian monster — blind chance guided it; its paddle-wheel turned swiftly with the motion of the water, and under the empty out-shoot the mill-stone revolved over the flour-bin as if it was working hard.

In this fabric devoted to certain destruction, there was no living thing except a white cat, which sat on the red-painted shingle roof and mewed piteously.

When he got close to the mill, Timar swung the rope and hook suddenly round his head, and aimed it at the paddle-wheel.

As soon as the grappling-iron had caught one of the floats, the wheel, driven by water-power, began to wind up the rope gently, and so give the mill a gradual turn towards the Perigrada Island; completing by its own machinery the suicidal work of casting itself on the rocks.

"Didn't I say Timar knew what he was about?" growled Johann Fabula; whilst Euthemio in joyful excitement exclaimed, "Bravo! my son," and pressed Timéa's hand so hard that she was frightened and even forgot the marmots.

"There, look!"

And now Timéa also noticed the mill. She required no telescope, for it and the ship were so near together that in the narrow channel they were only separated by about sixty feet.

Just enough to let the diabolical machine get safely past.

Timéa thought neither of the danger nor of the deliverance, only of the forsaken cat.

When the poor animal saw the floating house

and its inhabitants so near to it, it leapt up and began running up and down the roof-ridge, and to measure with its eye the distance between the mill and the ship, whether it dared jump.

“Oh, the poor little cat!” cried Timéa anxiously, “if we could only get near enough for it to come over to us.”

But from this misfortune the ship was preserved by its patron saint, and by the anchor-rope, which, wound up by the paddle-wheel, got shorter and shorter, and drew the wreck nearer the island and farther from the vessel.

“Oh, the poor pretty white cat!”

“Don’t be afraid,” Euthemio tried to console her; “when it passes the rock the cat will spring ashore, and be very happy living with the marmots.”

Only unluckily the cat, keeping on the hither side of the roof, could not see the island.

When the St Barbara had got safely past the enchanted mill, Timéa waved her handkerchief to the cat, and called out first in Greek, and then in the universal cat’s language, “Quick,

look, jump off, puss, puss-s-s-s;" but the animal, frantic with terror, paid no heed.

At the very moment when the stern of the ship had passed the mill, the latter was suddenly caught by the current, swung round so that the grappled wheel broke, and the liberated mass shot like an arrow down the stream. The white cat sprang up to the ridge.

"Ah!"

But the mill rushed on its fate.

Below the island is the great whirlpool.

It is one of the most remarkable eddies ever formed by the river giants—on every map it is marked by two arrows meeting in a corner. Woe to the boat which is swept in the direction of either arrow! Round the great funnel the water boils and rages as in a seething caldron, and in the middle of the circle yawns the bare abyss below. This whirlpool has worn a hole in the rock a hundred and twenty feet deep, and what it takes with it into this tomb, no one ever sees again: if it should be a man, he had better look out for the resurrection. And into this place the current carried the mill.

Before it reached there it sprang a leak and got a list over; the axle of the wheel stood straight on end; the white cat ran along to the highest point and stood there humping its back; the eddy caught the wooden fabric, carried it round in wide circles four or five times, turning on its own axis, creaking and groaning, and then it disappeared under the water. With it the white cat.

Timéa shuddered and hid her face in her shawl.

But the St Barbara was saved.

Euthemio pressed the hands of the returning oarsmen—Timar he embraced. Timar might have expected that Timéa would say a friendly word; but she only asked, pointing to the gulf with a disturbed face, "What is become of the mill?"

"Chips and splinters!"

"And the poor cat?" The girl's lips trembled, and tears stood in her eyes.

"It's all up with her."

"But the mill and the cat belonged to some poor man?" said Timéa.



“Yes; but we had to save our ship and our lives, or else we should have been wrecked, and the whirlpool would have drawn us down into the abyss, and only thrown up our bones on the shore.”

Timéa looked at the man who said this, through the prism of tear-filled eyes.

It was a strange world into which she gazed through these tears. That it should be permissible to destroy a poor man's mill in order to save one's own ship, that you should drown a cat so as not to get into the water yourself!—she could not understand it. From this moment she listened no more to his fairy-stories, but avoided him as much as possible.

## CHAPTER III.

## A DANGEROUS LEAP WITH A MAMMOTH.

INDEED Timar had but little time for story-telling ; for he had hardly got his breath after the exertions of his perilous achievement, before Euthemio gave him the glass and pointed where he was to look.

“ Gunboat — twenty - four oars — brigantine from Salonica.”

Timar did not put down the telescope till the other vessel was hidden from him behind the point of the Perigrada Island.

Then suddenly he let it fall, and, putting the horn to his lips, blew first three, then six, sharp blasts, at which the drivers whipped up their horses.

The rocky islet of Perigrada is surrounded by

two branches of the Danube. The one on the Servian side is that by which cargo-ships pass up; it is safer and cheaper, for half the number of horses suffice. By the Roumanian shore there is also a narrow channel, with just room for one vessel, but here you must use oxen, of which often a hundred and twenty are harnessed. The other arm of the river is again narrowed by the little Reskival Island, lying across the stream. (Now this island has been blown up in part, but at the time of our story the whole still existed.) Through the narrows between the two islands the river shoots like an arrow; but above, it lies between its rocky walls like a great lake. Only this lake has no smooth surface, for it is always in motion, and never freezes in the very hardest winter. Its bottom is thickly sown with rocks; some are under water, while other uncouth monsters project many feet above it.

This is the most dangerous part of the whole voyage. To this day, experienced seamen, English, Turks, Italians, at home on all seas, adventure themselves with much anxiety in this

rock-strewn channel. Here the majority of shipwrecks occur. Here in the Crimean War the splendid Turkish man-of-war "Silistria" was lost. She had been ordered to Belgrade, and might have given a new turn to affairs if she had not received a thrust in the ribs from one of the Reskival rocks, so enthusiastic in their peace policy that they obliged her to stay where she was.

Yet this lake, with its dangerous bottom, has a passage through it which but few ships know, and still fewer care to use.

This short cut enables mariners to cross from the channel on the Servian side to the Roumanian shore. The latter channel is divided by a ledge of rock from the Upper Danube, and you can only enter it at Szvinicza, and come out at Szkela-Gladova.

This is the dangerous leap with a floating mammoth.

The captain blows first three, and then six blasts on his horn; the drivers know at once what it means; the leader of the team has dismounted—with good reason too—and they all

begin with cries and blows to hurry on the horses. The vessel goes swiftly against the stream.

The horn blows nine times.

The drivers flog the horses furiously: the poor beasts understand the call and the blows, and tug till the rope is strained nearly to breaking. Five minutes of such effort are more exhausting than a whole day's labour.

Now twelve blasts of the horn sound in rapid succession. Man and horse collect the last remnant of their strength. Every moment one fancies they must break down. The towing-rope, a three-inch cable, is as taut as a bow-string, and the iron bolt round which the rope is wound is burning hot with the friction. The captain stands by with a sharp axe in his hand.

When the vessel gained its greatest impetus, with a single blow he severed the cable at the bow.

The tense rope flew whistling like a giant fiddle-string into the air; the horses of the towing-team fell down in a heap, and the leader broke its neck—his rider had wisely dismounted.

The ship, relieved of the strain, altered its course suddenly, and began, with its bow to the northern shore, to cut obliquely across the river.

Sailors call this bold manœuvre the "Cross-cut."

The heavy bulk is now propelled neither by stream nor oars; even the current is against it. Merely the after-effect of the shock it has received drives it over to the other bank.

The calculation of this impulse, with the distance to be traversed and the resistance which lessens the speed, would be a credit to any practical engineer. Common sailors have learnt it by rule of thumb.

From the moment when Timar cut the tow-rope, the lives of all on board were in the hands of the steersman.

Johann Fabula showed now what he could do. "Help, Lord Christ!" he muttered, but he did not keep his hands in his lap. Before him the ship rushed with winged speed into the lake formed by the Danube. Two men were now required at the tiller, and even these could hardly bridle the monster in its course.

Timar stood on the prow and sounded with the lead, in one hand holding the line; the other he stretched up, and showed the pilot with his fingers what water they had.

The steersman knew the rocks they were passing over just as well as he could have told exactly how much the river had risen in the last few weeks. In his hands the helm was safe; if he had made a single false movement, if only by an inch, the vessel would have received a shock which would stop her for a moment, and then she and all on board would have been driven head over heels into the Perigrada whirlpool, where the ship and the beautiful white girl would have joined the mill and the beautiful white cat.

Safely past the shallows of the Reskival rapids! Yet this is a bad place. The speed is less, the effect of the motive power already paralysed by the force of the stream, and the bottom sown with sharp rocks.

Timéa leant over the bulwarks and looked down into the water. Through the transparent waves, the bright-coloured rocks, a huge mosaic

of green and yellow and red, looked quite close. Between them shot silvery fishes with red fins. She was fascinated.

Deep silence fell over the scene : each knew that he passed over his grave, and would owe it to God's mercy if he did not find his monument down below. Only the girl felt no emotion of fear.

The vessel had arrived in a bay of rocks. Sailors have given them the name of "gun-stones"; perhaps because the sound of the breakers reminds one of the cracking of musketry fire.

Here the principal branch of the Danube concentrates itself in a deep bed. The sunken rocks are too far under water to be dangerous. Below, in the dark-green depths, one may see the slow and indolent forms of the dwellers of the sea—the great sturgeon and the hundred-pound pike, at whose approach the bright shoals of small fish scatter in haste.

Timéa gazed at the play of the aquatic population; it was like a bird's-eye view of an amphitheatre.



Suddenly she felt her arm seized by Timar, who dragged her from the bulwarks, pushed her into the cabin, and shut the door violently.

"Look out! Hallo!" shouted the crew as with one voice.

Timéa could not imagine what was happening that she should be so roughly treated, and ran to look out of the cabin window.

It was only that the ship had passed safely through the "gun-rocks," and was about to enter the Roumanian channel; but from the little bay the water rushes so furiously into the canal that a regular waterfall is formed, and this is the dangerous moment of the "Leap."

When Timéa looked out of the cabin window, she only saw that Timar stood at the bow with a grappler in his hand. Then suddenly a deafening noise arose, a huge foam-crowned mountain of water struck the fore part of the vessel, splashed its spray right against the window, and blinded Timéa for a moment. When she looked out again, the captain was no longer to be seen.

There were great cries outside. She rushed

out of the door and met her father. "Are we sinking?" she cried.

"No! The ship is saved, but the skipper is overboard."

Timéa had seen that: the big wave had washed him away before her eyes. But her heart beat no faster when she heard it.

Curious! When she saw the white cat drowned, she was in despair, and could not refrain from tears, and now when the water had swallowed up the captain, she did not even say "Poor fellow!"

Yes, but the cat had cried so pitifully, and this man defies the whole world; the cat was a dear little animal, the captain only a great rough man. And then the cat could not help itself; but he is strong and clever, and can certainly save himself. That's the only good of a man.

After the last leap the ship was safe, and swam in the smooth water of the canal. The sailors ran with grappling-irons to the boat to seek the captain. Euthemio held a purse up as a prize for the rescue of Timar. "A hundred ducats for him who rescues the captain."

"Keep your hundred ducats, good sir!" cried the voice of the man in question from the other end of the ship. "I'm coming."

Then they saw him climbing up the stern by the rudder-chains. No fear of his being lost!

As if nothing had happened, he began giving orders. "Let go!"

The three-hundredweight anchor was thrown over, and the ship brought up in the middle of the channel, so as to be hidden by the cliffs from the upper reaches of the river.

"And now ashore with the boat," Timar ordered three oarsmen.

"Change your clothes," advised Euthemio.

"Waste of time," answered Timar. "I shall soon be wet again; now I am thoroughly soaked. We have no time to spare."

The last words he whispered into Euthemio's ear.

The man's eyes glittered as he agreed. The captain sprang into the boat and rowed himself, so as to get quicker to the post-house on the bank, where towing-teams could be engaged. He collected hastily eighty oxen. Meanwhile a

new towing-rope was attached to the vessel, the oxen harnessed, and before half an hour had passed, the St Barbara was on her way again through the Iron Gate, and on the opposite side of the stream.

When Timar returned on board, his exertions had dried his clothes.

The ship was saved, perhaps doubly saved, and with it the cargo, Euthemio, and Timéa.

But what are they to him that he should work so hard? He is only the captain and supercargo, and receives a scanty salary as such. It cannot matter to him whether the vessel's hold is full of wheat or contraband tobacco or real pearls; his wages remain the same.

So also thought the "purifier," who, when they reached the Roumanian canal, resumed his interrupted conversation with the steersman.

"You'll allow, neighbour, that we were never nearer all going to destruction together than we were to-day."

"There's some truth in that," answered

- - -

"But why should we try the experiment whether we could get drowned on St Michael's day?"

"H'm," said Johann, and took a short pull at his brandy-flask. "What salary do you get, sir?"

"Twenty kreuzers a-day," answered the purifier.

"Why the devil do you come here to venture your life for twenty kreuzers a-day? I didn't send for you. I get a gulden and my food; so I have forty kreuzers more reason to venture my life than you. What does it matter to you?"

The health-officer shook his head, and threw back his hood, so as to be more easily heard.

"Listen," he said; "it strikes me the brigantine is chasing you, and the St Barbara is trying to escape."

"H'm," coughed the steersman, clearing his throat, and becoming suddenly too hoarse to make a sound.

"Well, it doesn't matter to me," said the purifier, with a shrug. "I'm Austrian born,

and I don't like the Turks. But I know what I know."

"Well, then, will the gentleman listen to what he doesn't know?" said Fabula, who had suddenly recovered his voice. "Certainly the gunboat is chasing us, and that's why we are showing him our heels. For, look you, they wanted to take the white-faced maiden into the Sultan's harem, but her father would not consent; he preferred to escape with her from Turkey, and now the object is to reach Hungarian territory as quickly as possible,—there the Sultan can't touch her. Now that's all about it, so ask no more questions, but go to St Barbara's picture, and light the lamp again if the water has extinguished it; and don't forget to burn three consecrated willow-twigs, if you're a good Christian."

The purifier drew himself up slowly, and looked for his tinder-box, and then he growled in his beard—

"*If* I am an orthodox Catholic? But they say you are only a Papist on board, and a Calvinist directly you set foot on shore: that you pray

in the ship, and can hardly wait for dry land before you begin cursing and swearing. And they say too that your name is Fabula, and that Fabula means just the same as a pocketful of lies. But of course I believe all you have told me, so you need not be angry."

"You're quite right there; but now you be off, and don't you come back till I call you."

The twenty-four rowers in the gunboat required three hours to get from the point where first the St Barbara was seen to the Perigrada Island, where the Danube divides into two arms. The cliffs of the island masked the whole bend, and on board the brigantine nothing of what had passed behind them could be seen.

Even below the island the gunboat had met with floating wreckage, which the eddy had thrown to the surface. This was part of the sunken mill, but could not be distinguished from the remains of a vessel. When the brigantine had passed the island a reach of a mile and a half lay open before her; neither in the stream nor by the bank was any large craft to be seen;

near the shore were only barges and rowing-boats.

The man-of-war went a little higher, cruised about in the river, and then returned to the shore. There the Turkish first-lieutenant inquired of the watchmen about a cargo-vessel passing by. They had seen nothing, for the ship had not got so far. Presently the brigantine overtook the St Barbara's towing-team, and of them also questions were asked. They were all good Servians, and explained to the Turks where they could find the St Barbara.

"She has gone down at the Perigrada Island with her cargo of fruit and all her crew; you can see here how the tow-rope parted."

The Turkish brigantine left the Servian drivers, who were all lamenting because no one was left to pay their wages. (In Orsova they know full well they will come up with their ship and tow her on.) But the commander, being a Turk, of course turned about and went downstream.

When the brigantine got back to the island the sailors saw a board dancing on the water



which did not float away. They fished it out : a rope was fastened to it by an iron hook, for the board was a float from the mill-wheel. Then they heaved up the rope, which had an anchor at its other end. This also was got in, and on its cross-piece, painted in great letters, there was the name St Barbara.

Now the whole catastrophe was quite clear. Her towing-rope had broken, she cast her anchor but it could not hold her, she drifted into the whirlpool, and now her timbers float on the surface, but her crew rests below in the deep pool.

Mashallah ! We cannot follow her there.

## CHAPTER IV.

## A STRICT SEARCH.

THE St Barbara had escaped two dangers, the rocks of the Iron Gate and the Turkish brigantine; two remained, the Bora and the quarantine in Orsova.

Above the bay of the Iron Gate the powerful stream is confined by its steep banks in a chasm only a hundred fathoms wide, through which the pent-up current forces its way, in parts with a fall of twenty-eight feet.

Up above the mountain peaks, three thousand feet in air, the eagles circle in majestic flight across the narrow strip of sky visible, whose pure azure seen from the awful depths below looks like a glass vault, and further yet rise more and higher peaks.

It is a sight, I trow, to call up spirits from hell. The impotent vessel, which has neither hands nor feet, nor yet fins, which, like an overladen nutshell, floats upwards in this narrow channel against wind and stream; and in it a handful of men, trusting in their intelligence and their strength. Here, too, even the Bora cannot harm them, for the double range of cliffs keeps off the wind. The steersman and the towing-team have easier work now.

But the Bora was not asleep. It was already afternoon. The chief steersman had given over the tiller to his deputy, and had gone to the galley which was in the stern. There he was busy preparing a "thieves' roast," of which the recipe is to spit on a long skewer a piece of beef, a piece of ham, and a piece of pork alternately, and then turn the skewer above an open fire till the meat is cooked.

All at once the narrow strip of sky visible between the almost touching cliffs grew dark. The Bora will not be defied.

Suddenly it drives down before it a storm which overcasts the blue sky, so that it is pitch

dark in the valley. Up above masses of cloud ; dark rocks on either hand. Now and then a dazzling flash darts through the heights, followed by a short abrupt thunder-clap, as if the narrow gorge could only contain one chord of the awful concert ; then again the lightning shoots into the Danube just in front of the ship, and by its fiery rays for an instant the whole rocky cathedral looks like the flaming gulf of hell, and the thunder rolls, with a crash as of a world destroyed, from one end of the resounding Titan's hall to the other. Rain falls in torrents, but the vessel must go on.

It must get on, that it may have left Orsova before night.

They can only see by the flicker of the lightning. Even with the horn they dare not signal, for it might be heard on the Roumanian side. But inventive man has found a way out of this difficulty.

The captain goes into the bow, gets out his flint and steel, and begins to strike out sparks. This fire cannot be extinguished by rain ; it can be seen by the drivers through the darkness,

and as often as the steel strikes a spark they know at once what to do; they also make signals from the bank by sparks. This is the secret telegraph of sailors and smugglers at the Iron Gate. And this silent language has been brought to perfection by the shore population on each side of the river.

Timéa liked the tempest. She had drawn her Turkish hood over her head, and looked out of the cabin window. "Are we in a cavern?" she asked the captain.

"No," answered Timar, "but at the door of a tomb. That high peak, which glows in the lightning-flashes like a mountain of fire, is the grave of St Peter, the 'Gropa lui Petro.' And the two other monsters near it are the 'Two Old Women.'"

"What old women?"

"According to the legend, a Hungarian and a Wallachian woman quarrelled as to which of their two countries could claim the tomb of St Peter. The apostle could not sleep in his grave for their squabbling, and in his anger he turned them into stone."

Timéa did not smile at the grotesque legend. She did not see anything ridiculous in it. "And how do they know that this is the grave of an apostle?" asked she.

"Because here many healing herbs grow, which they collect to cure all sorts of diseases, and send them great distances."

"So they call him an apostle, who even in his grave does good to others?" Timéa questioned.

"Timéa!" sounded from the cabin the imperious call of Euthemio.

The girl drew back her head from the window, and closed the circular shutter. When Timar looked round again he saw only the saint's picture.

The vessel continued her course in spite of the storm.

Suddenly the dark ravine was left behind, and as the two rock walls trended farther apart the gloomy vault overhead disappeared. Just as rapidly as the Bora had brought up the black thunder-clouds so quickly had it swept away the storm; and, all at once, the travel-

lers saw stretched before them the lovely Cserna-Thal.

The cliffs on both shores were covered to their summits with vineyards and fruit orchards; the landscape glittered in the glow of the evening sun; out of the green distance shone white houses, slender spires, and red roofs, and through the crystal rain-beads gleamed a gorgeous rainbow.

The Danube had lost its uncanny aspect. In its wider bed it could spread itself out comfortably; and on the western reaches of its sea-green mirror the travellers saw the reflection of Orsova on its island—for them the fourth, and greatest, bugbear.

The day had already sunk into twilight when the St Barbara arrived at Orsova.

“More wind to-morrow than even to-day,” grumbled the steersman, looking at the red sky.

There the evening clouds were piled like an avalanche, in all shades of fiery and blood red, and if the glowing mist-veil parted, through the rent the sky was not blue but emerald-

green. Below, mountain and valley, forest and field, gleamed in the sunset reflex with radiance which hurt the eye, unable to find a shady point of rest. The Danube rushing on beneath, like a fiery Phlegethon, and in its midst an island with towers and massive buildings, all glowing as if part of a huge furnace, through which every creature, coming from the pestilential east to the frontier of the healthy west, must pass as through purgatory.

But what most fixed the attention of the crew under this stormy sunset was a black-and-yellow striped boat, which was being rowed from the shore to the ship.

The Szkela is the double gate through which the neighbouring inhabitants of both sides of the Danube speak, bargain, and do business together.

The St Barbara had cast anchor before the island, and awaited the approaching boat, in which were three armed men—two with muskets and bayonets—besides two rowers and the steersman.

Euthemio paced anxiously up and down the small space in front of the cabin. Timar ap-



proached him and whispered, "The searcher is coming."

Trikaliss drew from his leathern pouch a silk purse, and took out two *rouleaux*, which he pressed into Timar's hand. In each were a hundred ducats.

Before long the boat was alongside, and the three armed men came on board. One is the overseer of taxes, the inspector, whose office it is to search the cargo for anything contraband or a prohibited importation of arms; the other two are custom-house officials, who render armed assistance, and serve as a check on the inspector to see if he carries out the search properly.

The purifier is the official spy, who reports whether the two officers have properly controlled the inspector. Then the latter three form a tribunal, which takes the evidence of the purifier as to whether he has detected the passengers in any infectious communication. This is all very systematically arranged, so that one organ should control the other, and each be mutually under inspection.

As a legal fee for these functions the chief has to receive a hundred kreuzers, each of the customs officials fifty, and the purifier also fifty, — which certainly is a moderate fee enough.

As soon as the inspector reaches the deck, the purifier comes towards him: the former scratches his ear and the latter his nose. No contact takes place.

Then the inspector turns to the captain, and both the other officials ground their arms. Still three paces apart! One can't tell whether the man has not got the plague.

The examination begins.

“Where from?”

“Galatz.”

“Name of ship's owner?”

“Athan Brazovics.”

“Owner of cargo?”

“Euthemio Trikaliss.”

“Where are the ship's papers?”

The reception of these is carefully arranged. A pan of live coals is brought, and strewn with juniper - berries and wormwood: the aforesaid

papers are held over it and well smoked, then taken by the inspector with a pair of tongs, read from as great a distance as possible, and afterwards returned. Nothing wrong, apparently, with the ship's papers.

The pan is carried away, and in its place a jug of water is brought. It is a capacious earthenware pot, with a mouth through which the largest fist can pass. It serves to facilitate the transmission of the tax. As the oriental plague is more easily communicated by coins than by anything else, the sailors coming from the Levant must throw the money into a jug of water, in order that the western health-officer may take it out cleansed: just as at the Szkela, every one must fish the money he receives out of a basin.

Timar thrust his clenched fist into the water, and brought it out open.

Then the inspector puts his hand in, draws it out as a clenched fist, and transfers it to his pocket. He does not need to look at it by the sunset light to see what manner of money it is. He knows it by the size and weight. Even

a blind man knows the feel of ducats. He does not change a muscle.

After him come the custom-house officials. These also with serious faces fish up their fee from the bottom of the jug.

Now for the turn of the purifier. His countenance is stern and forbidding. It hangs on a single word from his lips, whether the ship may have to lie ten or twenty days in quarantine with all her passengers. There are cold-blooded men like that who have only an eye to duty.

The inspector demands, in a surly, dictatorial tone, that the entrance to the lower deck be opened. His desire is obeyed. They all three go down; but none of the crew may follow them. When they are alone, the three strict servants of the law grin at each other. The purifier remains on deck, and only laughs in his sleeve.

They unfasten one of the many sacks, in which certainly there is only wheat. "Well, I hope it's mouldy enough," remarks the inspector. "Probably there is only wheat in the

other sacks, and very likely even more worm-eaten."

A document is now drawn up describing the search: one of the armed officials has the writing materials, and the other the form to be filled in. All is accurately set down. Then the inspector writes something on a bit of paper, which he folds and seals with a wafer, on which he presses the official seal. He writes no address on the note.

Then, after they have rummaged in every hole and corner where nothing suspicious is hidden, the three searchers rise to the light of day once more. At least to moonlight; for the sun has set, and through the hurrying clouds the moon ever and anon peeps down, and then vanishing, plays hide-and-seek with the world.

The inspector calls for the captain and gives him to understand—still in a severe official manner—that nothing suspicious has been found on board: then he requires the purifier, in the same manner, to declare the condition of the ship's health.

With an appeal to his oath of fidelity, the

purifier bears witness that every person on board as well as the cargo is free from infection.

A certificate that the papers are in order is prepared, and the receipts for the fees are handed over. A hundred kreuzers to the inspector, two fifties to the customs officers, and fifty to the health-officer. Not a kreuzer is wanting. These receipts are delivered to the owner of the cargo, who has never left his cabin the whole time—he is at supper. He also must countersign the receipts. From these signatures and endorsements, the shipowner and the honourable officials in question mutually learn that the captain gave away as many kreuzers as he received, and that not one remained sticking to his fingers.

Kreuzers! Well, yes; but about the gold?

The thought may well have passed through Timar's head, how would it be if of the fifty ducats which this dirty lot were to fish out of the jug he were only to put in forty (a fabulous sum to such fellows)? No creature would know that he had kept back ten. Indeed he might easily retain half of the whole sum, for



who is there to control it? Those for whom the money is intended are quite enough rewarded with half.

Another thought possibly answered thus. "What you are doing is without doubt bribery. You don't corrupt them with your own money, but Trikaliss gives it because his interests imperatively require it. You hand over the gold, and are as innocent of the bribery as the water-jug. Why he wants to bribe the inspector you do not know. Whether the ship carries contraband goods, whether he is a political refugee, or the persecuted hero of a romantic adventure, who in order to assist his escape strews gold in handfuls, what does it matter to you? But if one single gold piece sticks to your fingers, you become an accomplice in all which burdens another's conscience. Keep none of it."

The inspector gave permission for the vessel to proceed, in token of which a red-and-white flag with a black eagle on it was hoisted to the masthead. Then, after thus officially certifying that the ship from the Levant was quite free of infection, the inspector, without any

previous ordeal by water, pressed the captain's hand and said to him: "You come from Komorn? Then you know Herr Katschuka, chief of the Commissariat Department? Be good enough to give him this note when you get home. There is no address on it—not necessary, you won't forget his name; it sounds like a Spanish dance. Take him the letter as soon as ever you get there. You won't be sorry."

Then he clapped the captain most graciously on the shoulder, as if to make him his debtor for life, and the whole four left the ship and returned to Szkela in their black-and-yellow boat.

The St Barbara could now continue her voyage, and if all her sacks from the keel to the deck had been filled with salt or Turkish tobacco, and all her passengers covered with small-pox or leprosy from top to toe, no one could stop her any more on the Danube.

Now, however, there was on board neither contraband goods nor contagion, but—something else. Timar put the unaddressed note



into his pocket-book and wondered what it contained.

This was what was written—

“BROTHER-IN-LAW,—I recommend to you the bearer of this letter. He is a man of sterling worth.”

## CHAPTER V.

## THE OWNERLESS ISLAND.

THE towing-team left behind on the Servian bank crossed over the same night in ferry-boats to the Hungarian side with their severed hawser, spreading everywhere the news that the tow-rope had parted of itself at the dangerous Perigrada Island, and the ship had gone down with every soul on board. In the morning there was no longer a sign of the St Barbara in the harbour of Orsova. If by chance the commandant of the Turkish brigantine had had an idea of rowing up the channel from the Iron Gate to Orsova, he would not have found what he sought; and above, as far as Belgrade, only half the Danube belonged to him: on the Hungarian side he had no juris-

diction, but the fortress at New Orsova belonged to him.

At two o'clock in the morning the *St Barbara* left Orsova. After midnight the north wind generally stops; the favourable time must be utilised, and the crew had received a double ration of brandy to keep them in a good humour.

The departure was quite silent: from the walls of the New Orsova fort sounded the long call of the Turkish sentries. The horn gave no signal till the Allion point had disappeared behind the new mountain-chain.

At the first blast *Timéa* came from her cabin, where she had slept for a few hours, and went, wrapped in her white burnous, to the bow to look for *Euthemio*, who had never lain down all night, nor entered his cabin, nor even—which was more remarkable—smoked at all. He was not allowed to light any fire on board the ship, so as to avoid attracting attention to the vessel at the Orsova fortress.

Perhaps *Timéa* felt that she had to make up for a fault, for she addressed *Timar*, and asked him about the wonders of both shores.

The instinct of her childish heart whispered to her that she owed this man a debt of gratitude.

Dawn found the ship near Ogradina. The captain drew Timéa's attention to a monument 1800 years old. This was "Trajan's Tablet," hewn in the precipitous cliff, held by two winged genii and surrounded by dolphins. On the tablet is the inscription which commemorates the achievements of the godlike Emperor. If the peaks of the great "Sterberg" have vanished from the Servian shore, there follows a fresh rock-corridor, which confines the Danube in a ravine five hundred fathoms wide. This mountain hall goes by the name of "Kassan." Cliffs of two to three thousand feet high rise right and left, their curves lost in opal-coloured mist. From one precipice a stream falls a thousand feet out of a cave, like a delicate silver streak, dissolved in spray before it reaches the river. The two rock faces run on unbroken, only in one part the mountain is split, and through the rift laughs the blooming landscape of an alpine

valley, with a white tower in the background. It is the tower of Dubova: there is Hungary.

Timéa never turned her gaze from this spectacle until the ship had passed, and the mountains had closed over the exquisite scene, hiding the deep chasm in their shadows.

"I feel," she said, "as if we were going through a long, long prison, into a land from which there is no return."

The precipices grow higher, the surface of the Danube darker, and, to complete the wild and romantic panorama, there is visible on the northern face a cave whose mouth is surrounded by an earthwork with embrasures for cannon.

"That is Veterani's Cavern," said the captain. "There, more than a century ago, three hundred men and five cannon held out for forty days against a whole Turkish army." Timéa shook her head. But the skipper knew more still about the cavern.

"Forty years ago our people defended that cave in a bloody struggle against the Turks; the Osmanli lost over two thousand men amongst the rocks."

Timéa drew together her delicate eyebrows and threw the narrator an icy cold glance, so that all his eloquence died in his throat. She hid her mouth with her burnous, turned from Timar, went into the cabin, and did not reappear till evening. She only looked through the little window at the toppling crags on the bank, the massive watch-towers now deserted, the wooded cliffs of the Klissura valley, and the rock-colossi projecting from the stream, as they swept by her. She did not even ask for the history of the octagonal castle-donjon, with three small ones beside it inside a bastion. And yet she would have heard the fate of the lovely Cecilia Rozgonyi, the danger of King Sigismund, and the defeat of the Hungarians. This ruin is the Galamboczer Tower.

From first to last this double shore is a petrified history of two nations, mutually shadowed by a mad vagary of fate with the lust of conquest, which makes them fly at each other's throats, directly a war begins.

It is a long crypt containing the bones of many a hundred thousand heroes.

Timéa did not come out that day or the next. She sketched little views in her book, which she could hold quite steady on the smoothly gliding vessel.

Three days passed before the St Barbara arrived where the Morava falls into the Danube.

At the junction lies Semendria. On the thirty-six towers of this fortress have waved the banners sometimes of the Blessed Virgin and anon of the Crescent, and their circular brown walls are sprinkled with the blood of many nations. On the other shore of the Morava stand only the bare walls of the forsaken "Veste Kulics," and beyond the Ostrovaer Island frown down from a peak the ruins of the castle of Rama, now only a monument.

But this is not the moment to stand gazing at them—no one is inclined to indulge in melancholy reflections on the vanished greatness of fallen nations, for there is more pressing work on hand.

As soon as the Hungarian plains open out, the north wind storms down on the ship with such force that the towing-horses cannot make

head against it, and the wind drives the vessel towards the opposite shore.

"We can get no farther," is the general opinion.

Trikaliss exchanges a few private words with Timar, who goes to the pilot. Master Fabula makes the tiller fast and leaves it. Then he calls the rowers on board, and signs to the shore to stop the team. Here neither oars nor towing are of use. The ship is above the Orsova Island, which stretches a long pointed tongue into the stream : its northern side is steep and rugged, overgrown with old willows.

The task now is to get over to the south of the island, where the St Barbara can lie in a harbour protected from the north wind, as well as from the curious eyes of men ; for the wider stream which circles round the island towards Servia is not used by sailors, being full of sand-banks and fords.

It is a work of skill to approach : cutting the cable is no use, for the ship could not carry any way against such a wind. The only solution is hauling to the anchor.



The vessel casts anchor in mid-stream: the towing-rope is brought on board; to its end a second anchor is attached and placed in the boat. The rowers go towards the island till the whole length of the cable is out, then cast anchor and return to the ship. Now they weigh the first anchor, and four men haul on the cable made fast to the windlass. Heavy work!

When the vessel is close up to the anchor, they put the other in the boat, row forward, cast anchor again, and haul up as before. So by the sweat of their brow they made their way up-stream step by step. It took them half a day of hard labour to work the heavy cargo-ship from the middle of the Danube to the point of the great island. A fatiguing day for those who had to work, and wearier still to look on at. The vessel had left the frequented branch, where, at any rate, one saw ruins from time to time, where one met other ships, or floated by long lines of clattering mills: it now passed through the unfrequented channel, where the view was hidden on the right by a long

ugly island, on which only poplars and willows seemed to grow, nowhere a human habitation to be seen, and on the left the water was covered by a thick sea of reeds, amongst which the only sign of *terra firma* was a group of slender silver-leaved poplars.

In this quiet uninhabited spot the St Barbara was brought up. And now appeared a new calamity—the food was exhausted. When leaving Galatz, they had reckoned on the usual halt at Orsova for the purpose of shipping provisions ; but after starting so suddenly at night, they found there was nothing on board when they reached the island of Orsova but a little coffee and sugar, and in Timéa's possession a box of Turkish sweets and preserved fruits, which, however, she would not open, because it was intended as a present.

“Never mind,” said Timar ; “somebody must live on one shore or the other. There are lambs and kids everywhere, and one can get anything for money.”

Another misfortune set in. The anchored ship was so rolled about by the wind-driven

waves of the river, that Timéa got sea-sick and frightened.

Perhaps there was some house where she and her father could spend the night.

Timar's sharp eyes discovered that above the tops of the poplars rising from the reeds, a faint smoke hovered in the air. "There must be a house there. I will go and see who lives in it."

There was a small skiff on board, which the captain used on sporting expeditions, at times when the ship was delayed by foul winds, and he had leisure for wildfowl-shooting. He lowered it into the water, took his gun, his game-bag, and a landing-net—one never knows what may come in one's way, a bird or a fish—and went towards the bed of rushes, rowing and steering with one and the same oar. Being an experienced marsh-sportsman, he soon found the one opening in the reeds through which it was possible to penetrate, and recognised by the vegetation the depth of the channel.

Where the great leaves and snowy cups of the water-lily float on the surface, there is deep water which scours the weeds and mud away;

in other places duckweed forms a green carpet on the top, and on this floating velvet cowers the poisonous water-fungus in the form of a turnip-radish, blue and round, and swelled like a puff-ball—deadly poison to every living thing. When Timar's oar struck one of these polyp-like fungi, the venomous dust shot out like a blue flame. The roots of this plant live in a stinking slime which would suffocate man or beast who should fall into it; nature has given this vegetable murderer a habitat where it is least accessible. But where the cardinal-flower spreads its clubbed suckers, and where the beautiful bells of the water-violet sway amongst the rushes, there is gravel, which is not always under water. And where the manna tendrils begin to form a thicket, in pressing through which the sailor finds the brim of his hat full of little seeds—the food of the poor, manna of the wilderness—there must be higher ground, so that only the root of the plant is submerged.

The boatman who does not know these vegetable guides might lose himself in the reed-beds, and not get out all day.



When Timar had worked his way through the brake, which formed a labyrinth of flesh-coloured flower clusters, he saw before him what he sought—an island.

No doubt this was a new alluvial formation, of which no trace was to be found on the latest maps.

In the bed of the right arm of the Danube lay long ago a great boulder, at whose base the sluggish current had deposited a sandbank.

During some winter flood, the ice-floes tore from the Ostrova Island a spit of land bearing earth, stones, and a small wood. This mingled deluge of ice, gravel, and trees flung itself on the sandbank near the boulder. Repeated inundations spread over it year by year layers of mud, and enlarged its circumference by fresh deposits of pebbles: from the mouldering tree-trunks sprang a luxuriant vegetation as quickly as the natural creations of the New World; and so arose a nameless island, of which no one had taken possession, over which was no landlord, no king, no authority, and no Church—which belonged to no country and no diocese. In

Turco-Servian territory there are many such paradises, neither ploughed nor sown, not even used for pasture. They are the home of wild flowers and wild beasts, and God knows what besides.

The northern shore plainly proclaims its genesis. The gravel moraine is heaped there like a barricade, often in pieces larger than a man's head; between are tufts of rushes and rotten branches; the shallows are covered with green and brown river-shells; on the marshy parts round holes are washed out, in which, at the sound of approaching footsteps, hundreds of crabs rush to hide. The shore is covered along its whole length with prickly willow, which the ice-floes shave off every winter close to the root.

Here Timar drew his boat ashore and tied it to a tree. Pressing forward, he had to push his way through a thicket of huge willows and poplars—overthrown in many places by repeated storms—and there the fruitful bramble forms a thorny undergrowth, and tall valerian, shooting upwards from the weather-beaten soil, mixes its

aromatic scent with the wholesome smell of the poplar.

On a level depression where are neither trees nor bushes, luxuriant umbelliferous plants rise amidst the grass over a swamp—hemlock and “Sison Amonum,” smelling of cinnamon. In an isolated tuft like a vegetable aristocrat glitter the fiery blossoms of the veratrum; amongst the grass the forget-me-not spreads rankly, and the medicinal comfrey with red flowers full of honey. No wonder if in the hollows of the old trees there are so many wild bees’ nests. And amongst the flowers rise curious green, brown, and red capsules, the ripe seed-vessels of bulbous plants which bloom in spring.

On this flowery region follows more forest; but here the willows and poplar are mixed with wild apple-trees, and white-thorn forms the underwood. The island is higher here.

Timar stopped and listened. No sound. There can be no wild beasts on this island. The floods have exterminated them, and the place is only inhabited by birds.

Even amongst birds the lark and the wood-pigeon do not come here : it is no dwelling for them. They seek places where men live and sow and cultivate grain. But two creatures live here which betray the presence of man—the wasp and the blackbird ; both of which come after the ripe fruit which they passionately love. Where the great wasps' nests hang from the trees, and where the blackbird's alluring whistle sounds in the hedges, there must be fruit. Timar followed the blackbird. After he had pushed through the prickly white-thorn and the privet-bushes which tore his clothes, he stood transfixed with admiration.

What he saw before him was a Paradise.

A cultivated garden of five or six acres, with fruit-trees, not planted in rows, but in picturesquely scattered groups, whose boughs were weighed down by their sweet burden. Apple and pear trees covered with glittering red and yellow fruit, plums of all colours looking as if the shining crop were turned to roses and lilies ; the fallen surplus lying unnoticed on the ground. Beneath, a regular plantation



formed of raspberry, currant, and gooseberry bushes, with their red, yellow, and green berries; and the spaces between the large trees filled by the hanging branches of the Sidonian apple or quince.

There was no path through this labyrinth of fruit-trees—the ground underneath was covered with grass.

But where you can see through, a flower-garden beckons you on. It is also a collection of wonderful field blossoms not to be found in an ordinary garden: the roots of blue campanula, swallow-wort, with its fleecy seed-vessels from which a sort of silk is collected, the spotted turban-lily, algerian, with its scarlet berries, the splendid butterfly orchis—all of these raised to the rank of garden-flowers, bear witness to the presence of man. And this is further betrayed by the dwelling from which the smoke comes.

It also is a fantastic little refuge. Behind it stands a great rock, in which is an excavation, where the hearth must be, and another hole for the cellar. At the top is a chimney, from which

a blue cloud arises. A building of stone and clay tiles is stuck on to the cliff; it has two rooms, each with a window. One window is smaller, and one room lower than the other; both are roofed with rushes; each has a wooden porch, forming a veranda, with fanciful ornaments made of little bits of wood.

But neither stone, clay, nor wood-work can be distinguished, so thickly is it covered on the south side with vines, out of whose frost-bitten leaves thousands of red and gold bunches peep out. On the northern side it is overgrown with hops, whose ripe clusters hide even the pinnacle of the great rock with their greenish gold; and on its highest point tufts of house-leek are planted, so that no spot may remain which is not green.

Here women live.

## CHAPTER VI.

## ALMIRA AND NARCISSA.

TIMAR turned his steps towards the creeper-covered cottage. Through the flower-garden a path led to the house, but so covered with grass that his steps were not heard, and he could thus get as far as the little veranda quite noiselessly. Neither far nor near was a human being visible.

Before the veranda lay a large black dog—one of the noble race of Newfoundland, generally so sensible and dignified as to forbid undue familiarity on the part of strangers. The afore-said quadruped was one of the finest of the race—a colossal beast; and occupied the whole width of the doorway.

The sable guardian appeared to be asleep,

and took no notice of the approaching stranger, nor of another creature which left no foolhardy impertinence untried in order to tax the patience of the huge animal. This was a white cat, which was shameless enough to turn somersaults back and forward over the dog's recumbent form, to strike it on the nose with her paw, and at last to lay herself before it on her back, and take one of its webbed paws between her four soft feet and play with it like a kitten. When the great black porter found its foot tickled, it drew it back and gave the cat the other one to play with.

Timar did not think to himself—"Suppose this black colossus seizes me by the collar, it will go hard with me;" but he thought, "Oh! how delighted Timéa will be when she sees this white cat."

You could not pass the dog and get in—it barred the whole entrance. Timar coughed, to announce that some one was there. Then the great dog raised its head and looked at the new-comer with its wise nut-brown eyes, which, like the human eye, can weep and laugh, scold

and flatter. Then it laid its head down again, as much as to say, "Only one man; it's not worth while to get up."

But Timar decided that where a chimney smokes, there's a fire in the kitchen; so he began from outside to wish this invisible some one "Good morning," alternately in three languages—Hungarian, Servian, and Roumanian. Suddenly a female voice answered in Hungarian from within, "Good day. Come in then. Who is it?"

"I should like to come in, but the dog's in the way."

"Step over it."

"Won't it bite?"

"She never hurts good people."

Timar took courage and stepped across the powerful animal, which did not move, but raised its tail as if to wag him a welcome.

Going into the veranda, Timar saw two doors before him: the first one led to the stone building, the other to the grotto hollowed in the rock. The latter was the kitchen. There he observed a woman busy at the hearth.

Timar saw at a glance that she was not preparing a magic potion of witches' cookery, but simply roasting Indian corn.

The woman thus occupied was a thin but strong and sinewy figure, with a dark skin; in her compressed lips lay something severe, though her eye was soft and inspired confidence. Her sunburnt face betokened her age as not much over thirty. She was not dressed like the peasants of the district; her clothes were not bright in colour, but yet not suited to towns.

"Now, come nearer and sit down," said the woman, in a singularly hard voice, which, however, was perfectly quiet; and then she shook the floury snow-white Indian corn into a plaited rush-basket, and offered it to him. Afterwards she fetched a jug which stood on the floor, and gave him elder-wine, this also just freshly made.

Timar sat down on the stool offered him, which was skilfully woven of various osiers, and of a curious shape. Then the Newfoundland rising, approached the guest and lay down in front of him.



The woman threw the dog a handful of the white confectionery, which it at once began to crack in the proper way. The white cat attempted to do the same, but the first cracked kernel of the maize stuck in her teeth, and she did not try it again. She shook the paw with which she had touched it, and sprang up to the hearth, where she blinked with much interest at an unglazed pot which was simmering by the fire, and probably held something more to her taste.

“A magnificent beast,” said Timar, looking at the dog. “I wonder it is so gentle; it has not even growled at me.”

“She never hurts good people, sir. If a stranger comes who is honest, she knows it directly, and is as quiet as a lamb—doesn’t even bark; but if a thief tries to get in, she rages at him as soon as he sets foot on the island, and woe to him if she gets her teeth in. She is a formidable creature! Last winter a large wolf came over the ice after our goats—look, there is his skin on the floor of the room. In a moment the dog had throttled him. An

honest man can sit on her back, she won't touch him."

Timar was quite satisfied to have such excellent evidence of his honesty. Who knows, perhaps, if some of those ducats had lost their road in his pocket, he might have been differently received by the great dog?

"Now, sir, where do you come from, and what do you want of me?"

"First, I must beg you to excuse my having pushed through the thorns and bushes into your garden. The storm has driven my vessel over to this bank, so I was obliged to run for shelter under the Ostrova Island."

"Indeed, yes; I can hear by the rustle of the branches that a strong wind is blowing."

This place was so completely sheltered by the virgin forest, that one could feel no wind, and only knew by the sound when it blew.

"We must wait for a change of wind before the storm blows over. But our provisions have run out, so I was forced to seek the nearest house from which I saw smoke rising, to ask



the housewife whether for money and fair words we could get food for the crew."

"Yes, you can have what you want, and I don't mind being paid for it, for that's what I live on. We can serve you with kids, maize-flour, cheese, and fruit; choose what you want. This is the trade which keeps us; the market women round about fetch away our wares in boats: we are gardeners."

Till now Timar had seen no human being except this woman; but as she spoke in the plural, there must be others besides herself.

"I thank you beforehand, and will take some of everything. I will send the steersman from the ship to fetch the things; but tell me, my good lady, what's to pay? I want food for my seven men for three days."

"You need not fetch out your purse; I don't receive payment in money. What should I do with it, here on this lonely island? At best thieves would be sure to get in and kill me to get hold of it; but now every one knows there is no money on the island, and therefore we can sleep in peace. I only barter. I give fruit,

wax, honey, and simples, and people bring me in exchange grain, salt, clothes, and hardware."

"As they do on the Australian islands?"

"Just the same."

"All right, good lady; we have grain on board, and salt too. I will reckon up the value of your wares, and bring an equal value in exchange. Rely upon it, you shan't be the loser."

"I don't doubt it, sir."

"But I have another favour to ask. On board my vessel there is a grand gentleman and his young daughter. The young lady is not accustomed to the motion, and feels unwell. Could you not give my passengers shelter till the storm is over?"

"Well, that I can do too, sir. Look, here are two small bedrooms. We will retire into one, and in the other any honest man who wants shelter can have it—rest, if not comfort. If you also would like to stay, you will have to be contented with the little garret, as both the rooms will have women in them. There is new hay there, and sailors are not particular."

Timar puzzled his head as to the position of this woman, who chose her words so well and expressed herself so sensibly. He could not reconcile it with this hut, which was more like a cave, and with the residence on this lonely island in the midst of a wilderness. "Many thanks, good lady ; I'll hurry back and bring up my passengers."

"All right ; only don't go back to your boat the same way you came. You can't bring a lady through those marshes and briars. There's a tolerable path all along the bank, rather overgrown with grass it is true, for it is very little trodden, and turf grows quickly here ; but you shall be conducted to where your boat lies ; then when you come back in a larger one, you can land rather nearer. I will give you a guide now. Almira !"

Timar looked round, to see from what corner of the house or from what bush this Almira would appear who was to show him the way. But the great black Newfoundland rose and began to wag her tail, whose strokes made a noise on the door-post as if an old drum was touched.

"Off, Almira; take the gentleman to the shore," said the woman; on which the creature growled something to Timar in dog's language, and taking the edge of his cloak in her teeth, pulled at it, as if to say, Come along.

"So this is Almira, who is to conduct me. I am much indebted to you, Miss Almira," Timar said smiling, and took his gun and hat; then saluted his hostess and followed the dog. Almira led the guest steadily in all friendship by the hem of his cloak. The way lay through the orchard, where one had to tread carefully so as not to crush the plums which covered the ground. The white cat, too, had not remained behind; she wanted to know where Almira was conducting the stranger, and leaped here and there in the soft grass.

When they arrived at the edge of the orchard, somewhere above was heard the call of a musical voice, "Narcissa!"

It was a girl's voice, in which some reproach, but much love and maidenly shyness, were blended — a sympathetic voice. Timar looked

round : he wanted to know, first, where it came from, and then to whom it belonged.

He soon discovered who was called, for at the sound the white cat sprang quickly to one side, and, curling her tail, climbed zigzag up a gnarled pear-tree, through whose thick foliage Timar saw something like a white dress glimmering. He had no time for further research, for Almira gave a few deep sounds which, in quadruped's language, probably meant, "What business have you to spy about?" and so he was obliged to follow his leader, if he did not desire to leave a piece of his cloak in her teeth.

Almira led Timar by a soft turf path along the bank to the place where his boat was made fast. At this moment a couple of snipe rose with their shrill cry close to the island. Timar's first thought was of the savoury dish they would make for Timéa's supper. In an instant he had shouldered his gun, and with a well-aimed right and left brought down both snipe.

But the next moment he was himself on the ground. As soon as he had fired, Almira seized

him by the collar, and like lightning pulled him down. He tried to rise, but soon felt that he had to do with an overpowering adversary who was not to be trifled with. Not that Almira had hurt him, but she held him by the collar, and would not allow of his getting up.

Timar tried every conceivable means to soften her, called her Miss Almira, his dear friend, and explained to her sport and its usages; where the devil had she heard of a dog that retrieves a sportsman? she should rather go after the snipe in the rushes: but he talked to deaf ears.

He was at last relieved from this dangerous situation by the woman of the island, who had run up at the report of the gun, and called Almira by name from afar, on which the dog let go her hold.

"Oh, my God!" she lamented, hastening over the stones to the point of danger. "I forgot to tell you not to shoot, because Almira was sure to attack you. She gets in a fury when a shot is fired. Well, I was stupid not to tell you."

...



"Never mind, good woman," said Timar, laughing. "Almira would really make a capital gamekeeper. But look, I have shot a couple of snipe; I thought they would be a help towards the supper that you will set before your guests."

"I will fetch them; get into your boat, and when you come back, just leave your gun at home, for, believe me, if the dog sees you with a gun on your arm, she will take it away from you. You can't joke with her."

"So I find. A powerful, grand animal that! Before I had time to defend myself, I was on the ground: I can only thank Heaven that she did not bite my head off."

"Oh, she never bites any one; but if you defend yourself, she seizes your arm in her teeth, as if it were in irons, and then holds you fast till we come and call her off. *Auf Wiedersehen!*"

In less than an hour the larger boat had landed its passengers safely at the island. All the way from the vessel to the shore, Timar talked to Timéa of Almira and Narcissa, to

make the poor child forget her sickness and her fear of the water. As soon as she set foot on shore, her sea-sickness vanished.

Timar went on in front to show the way ; Timéa followed, leaning on Euthemio's arm ; and two sailors and the steersman carried behind them on a stretcher the equivalent of the barter in sacks. Almira's bark was heard a long way off. These were the sounds of welcome by which the dog acknowledged the approach of good friends. Almira came half-way, barked at the whole party, then had a little talk to the sailors, the steersman, and Timar ; then trotting to Timéa, tried to kiss her hand. But when the dog came to Euthemio, it was quiet, and began to sniff at him from the soles of his feet upwards, never leaving his heels. It snuffed continually, and shook its head violently, rattling its ears till they cracked. It had its own opinion on this subject.

The mistress of the island settlement awaited the strangers at the door, and as soon as they appeared between the trees, called in a loud voice, "Noémi !"



At this summons some one appeared from inside the garden. Between two tall thick raspberry hedges which, like green walls, almost closed in an arch at the top, came a young girl. Face and form those of a child just beginning to develop, dressed in a white chemise and petticoat, and carrying in her upturned overskirt fruit freshly plucked.

The figure coming out of the green grove is idyllic. The delicate tints of her face seem to have been borrowed from the complexion of the white rose when she is grave, and take that of the red rose when she blushes, and that up to the brow. The expression of the clear-arched brow is personified sweet temper, in complete accord with the innocent look of the expressive blue eyes; on the tender lips lies a mixture of devoted regard and modest shyness. The rich and luxuriant golden-brown hair seems to be curled by nature's hand; a lock thrust back gives a view of an exquisite little ear. Over the whole face gentle softness is spread. It is possible that a sculptor might not take each feature as a model, and perhaps if the face

were hewn in marble one might not think it beautiful; but the head and the whole figure just as they are, shine with a loveliness which charms at the first glance, and enthralls more every moment.

From one shoulder the chemise has dropped, but, that it may not remain uncovered, there sits a white cat, rubbing her head against the girl's cheek. The delicate feet of the maiden are naked—why should she not go barefoot? She walks on a carpet of richest velvet. The spring turf is interspersed with blue veronica and red geranium.

Euthemio, his daughter, and Timar, stopped at the entrance of the raspberry arcade to await the approaching figure.

The child knew of no more friendly reception to give the guests than to offer them the fruit she had in her lap. They were beautiful red-streaked Bergamot pears. She turned first to Timar. He chose the best, and gave it to Timéa.

Both girls shrugged their shoulders impatiently. Timéa because she envied the other

one the white cat on her shoulder, but Noémi because Timar had given the fruit to Timéa.

"Oh, you rude thing!" cried the mistress to her from the cottage; "could you not put the fruit in a basket, instead of offering it in your apron? Is that the proper way?"

The little thing grew red as fire, and ran to her mother; the latter whispered a few words into her ear, so that the others might not overhear, then kissed the child on the forehead, and said aloud, "Now go and take from the sailors what they have brought, carry it into the store-room, and fill the sacks with corn-flour, the pots with honey, and the baskets with ripe fruit: of the kids, you can choose two for them."

"I can't choose any," whispered the girl; "they must do it themselves."

"Foolish child!" said the woman, with a kind reproof; "if it were left to you, you would keep all the kids and never let one be killed. Very well, let them choose for themselves, then no one can complain. I will look after the cooking."

Noémi called the sailors, and opened the

food and fruit stores, which were each in a different cave and shut off by a door. The rock which formed the summit of the island was one of those wandering blocks, called "erratic" by geologists,—an isolated boulder, a monolith, which must once have been detached from a distant mountain, some limestone formation from the Dolomites, out of a moraine. It was full of large and small caves, which the first person who took possession of it had adapted to his own purposes: the largest with the natural chimney for the kitchen, the highest as a dovecot, the others for summer and winter store-houses. He had settled on the heaven-sent rock, and, like the wild birds, built his nest there.

The child managed the barter with the crew well and honestly. Then she gave each his glass of elder-wine, to wet the bargain, begged for their custom when they passed again, and went back to the kitchen.

Here she did not wait to be told to lay the table. She spread a fine rush mat on the small table in the veranda, and placed on it four

plates, with knives and forks and pewter spoons. And the fifth person?

She will sit at the cat's table. Near the steps to the veranda stands a small wooden bench; in the centre is placed an earthenware plate with a miniature knife and fork and spoon, and at each end a wooden platter, one for Almira, the other for Narcissa. They require no *couvert*. When the three guests and the mistress of the house have sat down and helped themselves from the dish, it goes to the cat's table, where Noémi serves her friends. She conducts the division with great fairness—the soft pieces to Narcissa, the bones to Almira—and helps herself last. They must not touch their food till she has cooled it for them, however much Almira may cock her ears, and the cat snuggle up to her mistress's shoulder. They must obey the girl.

The island woman wished, according to the good or bad Hungarian custom, to show off before her guests, and especially to prove to Timar that her larder was independent of his game. She had cooked the two snipe with oat-



meal, but whispered to Timar that that was only food for ladies ; for the gentlemen she had some good fried pork. Timar attacked it bravely, but Euthemio touched none of it, saying he had no appetite, and Timéa rose suddenly from the table. But that was natural : she had already cast many inquisitive glances towards the party at the other table ; there was nothing remarkable in her rising suddenly and going over to sit by Noémi. Young girls soon make friends. Timéa did not know Hungarian, nor Noémi Greek ; but between them was Narcissa, to whom both languages were the same.

The white cat seemed to understand perfectly when Timéa said "*Horaion galion*" to it, and stroked its back with a soft white hand : then it crept from Noémi's lap to Timéa's, raised its head to her face and gently rubbed its white head against her white cheeks, opened its red mouth, showed its sharp teeth, and blinked at her with cunning eyes ; then sprang on her shoulder, crawled round her neck, and clambered to Noémi and back again.

Noémi was pleased that the strange young lady liked her favourite so much, but bitterness mingled with her pleasure when she saw how much the stranger had fallen in love with the cat, kept and kissed it; and still more painful was it to realise how easily Narcissa became untrue to her, how willingly it accepted and replied to the caresses of its new friend, and took no notice when Noémi called it by name to come back to her. "Horaion galion" (pretty pussy) pleased it better. Noémi grew angry with Narcissa, and seized her by the tail to draw her back. Narcissa took offence, turned her claws on her mistress, and scratched her hand.

Timéa wore on her wrist a blue enamelled bracelet in the form of a serpent. When Narcissa scratched her mistress, Timéa drew off the elastic bracelet, and wanted to put it on Noémi's arm, obviously with the intention of comforting her in her pain; but Noémi misunderstood, and thought the stranger wanted to buy Narcissa with it. But she was not for sale.

"I don't want the bracelet! I won't sell

Narcissa! Keep the bracelet! Narcissa is mine. Come here, Narcissa!" and as Narcissa would not come, Noémi gave her a little box on the ear, on which the frightened animal made a jump over the bench, puffing and spitting, climbed up a nut-tree, and looked angrily down from thence.

As Timéa and Noémi at this moment looked into each other's eyes, each read there a dreamy presentiment. They felt like a person who shuts his eyes for a moment, and in that short time dreams whole years away; yet, when he awakes, has forgotten it all, and only remembers that the dream was very long. The two girls felt in that meeting of looks that they would some day mutually encroach on each other's rights, that they would have something in common—a grief or a joy—and that, perhaps, like a forgotten dream, they would only know that each owed this grief or joy to the other.

Timéa sprang up from beside Noémi and gave the bracelet to the housewife; then she sat down by Euthemio and leant her head on his shoulder.



Timar interpreted the gift. "The young lady gives it to the little girl as a remembrance—it is gold."

As soon as he said that it was of gold, the woman threw it frightened from her hand, as if it were a real snake. She looked anxiously at Noémi, and was not even able to articulate "Thank you."

Then Almira suddenly drew attention to herself. The dog had sprung quickly from its bed, had uttered a low howl with its head up, and now began to bark with deafening noise. In the sound lay something of the lion's roar; it was a vehement defiant tone, as if calling to the attack, and the dog did not run forward, but remained by the porch, planted its paws on the ground, and then threw up the earth with its hind feet.

The woman turned pale. A figure appeared between the trees on the footpath.

"The dog only barks in that way at one man," she murmured. "There he comes. It is he."

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE VOICES OF THE NIGHT.

THE new arrival is a man of youthful appearance ; he wears a blouse and trousers, round his neck a red cotton handkerchief, and on his head a Turkish fez.

He has a handsome face. If he sat quietly to an artist, every one would say of his portrait that it was the ideal of a hero ; but when he is in motion, the first thought must be—that is a spy. His features are regular, the thick hair curly, the lips finely chiselled, the eyes deeply black ; but the wrinkles round them and their restless fire, the upturned corners of the mouth, and the ever-twitching brows, betray the soul of a slave to his own appetites.

Almira barked furiously at the new-comer,

who came swinging along with defiant nonchalance, like one who knows that it is other people's duty to protect him. Noémi told the dog to lie down, but it gave no heed; she caught the creature's ears in both hands and drew it back: the dog whined and growled at the discomfort, but did not cease barking. At last Noémi put her foot on its head and pressed it to the ground. Then Almira gave in, lay down growling, and let the girl's foot lie on her great black head, as if that were a burden she could not shake off.

The stranger came whistling and humming up to them. From afar he called out—"Ah! you have still got that confounded big brute; you haven't had her poisoned? I shall have to get rid of her in the end. The stupid beast!" When the young man got near Noémi, he stretched out his hand with a familiar smile towards the girl's face, as if he would have pinched her cheek; but she drew her face quickly away.

"Well, my dear little *fiancée*, are you still so shy? How you have grown since I saw you!"

Noémi looked at the speaker with her head thrown back. She wrinkled her forehead, curled her lips, and threw a defiantly penetrating glance at him; even her complexion changed, the rose tint on her cheeks turned livid. Evidently she could look odious if she chose.

The new-comer, however, quite unabashed, continued, "How pretty you have grown!"

Instead of answering she said to the dog, "Down, Almira!"

The stranger behaved as though he were quite at home under the veranda, where his first act was to kiss the hand of the woman of the house. He greeted Timar with friendly condescension, made a polite bow to Euthemio and Timéa, and then opened the flood-gates of his eloquence. "Good evening, dear mother-in-law! Your obedient servant, captain! Sir and mademoiselle, you are welcome. My name is Theodor Krisstyan; I am chevalier and captain, the future son-in-law of this worthy lady. Our fathers were bosom friends, and betrothed Noémi to me in their lifetime, so I come every

year to see my sweetheart in her summer abode, in order to judge how my bride is growing. Uncommonly delighted to find you here: you, sir—if I am not mistaken, your name is Timar—I have had the pleasure of meeting before? The other gentleman, I fancy——”

“Understands nothing but Greek,” interrupted Timar, thrusting his hands well into his pockets, as if he wanted to make it impossible for the stranger to shake hands over the joy of meeting. He, who from his calling was always travelling, might very likely have met him before.

Theodor Krisstyan did not feel inclined to occupy himself any more with Timar, but looked at life from the practical side. “It is just as if you had expected me; a beautiful supper, an unused place, pork, just my weak point. Thanks, dear mamma, thanks, gentlemen and young lady; I will pay my respects to the supper—so many thanks!”

Not that a single person of those addressed had asked him to sit down and partake; but as though accepting their invitation, he seated



himself in Timéa's empty place and began to enjoy the pork; offering it repeatedly to Euthemio, and seeming much astonished that any Christian should neglect such a delicious dish.

Timar rose from the table and said to the hostess, "The gentleman-passenger and the young lady are tired. They want rest more than food. Would you be so good as to show them their beds?"

"That shall be done at once," said the woman. "Noémi, go and help the young lady to undress."

Noémi rose and followed her mother and the two guests into the back room. Timar also left the table, at which the new-comer remained alone, and gobbled down with wolfish hunger every eatable left: meanwhile he talked over his shoulder to Timar, and threw to Almira the bare bones with his fork.

"You must have had a devilish bad journey, sir, with this wind. I can't think how you got through Denin Kafoin and the Tatalia Pass. Catch, Almira! and don't be cross with me any

more, stupid brute ! Do you remember, sir, how we once met in Galatz ?—there, that's for you too, you black beast !”

When he looked round he found that neither Timar nor Almira was there. Timar had gone to the attic to sleep, where he soon made himself a couch of fragrant hay, while Almira had crept into some cranny in the great mass of rock.

He turned his chair round, but not till he had drained the last drop from the wine-jug and the glasses of the other guests. Then he cut a splinter from the chair he was sitting on, and picked his teeth with it, like a person who has thoroughly deserved his supper.

Night had set in ; travellers weary of knocking about want no rocking. Timar had stretched himself on the soft sweet hay very comfortably, and thought that to-night he would sleep like a king. But he deceived himself. It is not easy to fall asleep after hard work, which has been mingled with varied emotions. Successive shapes besieged his bed like a chaotic panorama : a confusion of pursuing forms, threatening rocks,

waterfalls, ruined castles, strange women, black dogs, white cats; and amidst it all a howling tempest, blasts of the horn, cracking of whips, showers of gold, laughing, whispering, and screaming human voices.

And all at once people began to speak in the room below. He recognised the voices, the hostess and the last-comer talking together. The garret was separated from the other room only by a thin floor, and every word was audible, as if it had been whispered in the listener's ear. They spoke in suppressed tones, only now and then the man raised his voice.

"Well, Mother Therese, have you much money?" began the man.

"You know very well that I have none. Don't you know that I only barter and never take money?"

"That's very stupid. I don't like it. And what's more, I don't believe it."

"It is as I say. Whoever comes to buy my fruit brings me something for my own use. What should I do here with money?"

"I know what you could do, you could give



it to me. You never think of me. When I marry Noémi you can't give her dried plums for a dowry; but you don't care about your daughter's happiness. You ought to help me, that I may get a good situation. I have just received my nomination as first dragoman at the embassy; but I have no money to get there, for my purse has been stolen, and now I shall lose my situation."

The woman answered in a calm tone, "That any one has given you any place that you could lose I don't believe; but I do believe you have a place you can't lose. That you have no money, I believe that; but that it was stolen from you I don't believe."

"Well, don't then. And I don't believe you have no money; you must have some. Smugglers land here sometimes, and they always pay well."

"Speak loud, of course! Yes, it is true, smugglers often land on the island; but they don't come near my hut, or if they do, they buy fruit and give me salt in exchange. Will you have some salt?"

"You are laughing at me. Well, and such visitors as you have to-night?"

"I don't know whether they are rich or not."

"Ask them for money! Demand it! Don't make a solemn face! You must get money somehow; don't try to take me in with this ridiculous Australian barter. Get ducats if you want to keep the peace with me; you know if I say a single word at the right place it's all up with you."

"Softly, you wretched man!"

"Ah! now you want me to whisper. Well, shut my mouth then, be kind to me, Therese,—let me have a little money."

"But I tell you there is none in the house! Don't worry me! I have not a farthing, and don't want any; there is a curse on anything which is gold. There, all my chests and boxes are here; look through them, and if you find anything, take it."

It appeared that the man was not slow to take advantage of this permission, for soon he was heard to exclaim, "Ah! What is this? A gold bracelet."

"Yes; the strange lady gave it to Noémi. If you can make use of it, take it."

"It's worth some ten ducats—well, that's better than nothing. Don't be angry, Noémi; when you are my wife I will buy you two bracelets, each thirty ducats in weight, and with a sapphire in the middle—no, an emerald. Which do you prefer, a sapphire or an emerald?" He laughed at his sally, and as no one answered his question, he continued, "But now, Mother Therese, prepare a bed for your future son-in-law, your dear Theodor, so that he may dream sweetly of his beloved Noémi!"

"I cannot give you a bed. In the next room and in the garret are our guests; you can't sleep here in our room, that would not be proper—Noémi is no longer a child. Go out and lie down on the bench."

"Oh, you hard-hearted, cruel Therese. You send me to the hard bench—me, your beloved future son-in-law!"

"Noémi, give your pillow—there, take it! And here's my coverlet. Good night."

“Yes, if there were not that accursed great dog out there—the fierce brute will devour me.”

“Don’t be afraid, I will chain her up. Poor beast! she is never tied up except when you are on the island.”

Frau Therese had some trouble to entice Almira out of her hole; the poor dog knew well enough what awaited her in these circumstances, and that she would now be chained up, but she was used to obedience, and allowed her mistress to fasten the chain.

But this made her all the more furious against him who was the cause of her confinement. As soon as Therese had gone back to her room, and Theodor remained alone outside, the dog began to bark madly, and danced about on the small space left free to her by the chain, now and then making a spring, to see whether she could succeed in breaking the collar or the chain, or rooting up the tree-trunk to which the chain was fastened.

But Theodor teased her again. He thought it amusing to enrage an animal which could not reach him, and foamed with fury at its im-



potence. He went closer, leaving only a step between himself and the point the chain permitted the dog to reach; then he began to creep towards her on all fours and make faces at her. He brayed at her like a donkey, put his tongue out, spat in her face, and imitated the dog's bark. "Bow-wow! You would like to eat me, wouldn't you? Bow-wow! There's my nose; bite it off if you can. You're a lovely dog—you horrid beast! Bow-wow! Break your chain and come wrestle with me; snap at my finger, there it is before your nose; only don't you wish you may get it?"

At the moment of her greatest fury, Almira suddenly stopped. She barked no more; she understood. It is the wise one that gives in, thought she. She stretched her head up as if to look down on that other four-legged beast in front of her, then turned and scratched as dogs do, backwards, with her hind feet, whirling up dust and sand, so that the other brute got his eyes and mouth full of it, which made him beat a retreat, breaking out in the human bark—curses, to wit. But Almira retired with her

chain into the hole near the elder-tree and came out no more; she ceased to bark, but a hot panting could be heard for a long time.

Timar heard it too. He could not sleep; he had left the trap-door open to get some light. The moon shone, and when the dog was silenced, deep stillness lay over the scene; a wonderful calm, rendered more fantastic by the isolated voices of the night and the solitude. The rattle of carriages, the clatter of mills, human voices—none of these struck the ear. This is the kingdom of swamps, islets, and shallows. From time to time a deep note sounds through the night—the boom of the bittern, that hermit of the marsh. Flights of night-birds strike long-drawn chords in the air, and the breathing wind stirs in the poplars, as it sighs through their quivering leaves. The seal cries in the reeds like the voice of a weeping child, and the cockchafer buzzes on the white wall of the hut. All around lies the dark brake, in which fairies seem to hold a torchlit dance; under the decayed trees Will-o'-the-wisps wander, pursuing each other. But the flower-garden is flooded by the

full radiance of the moon, and night-moths hover on silvery peacock wings round the tall mallows. How exquisite, how divine is this solitude! the whole soul is absorbed in its contemplation.

If only no human tones were mingled with these voices of the night!

But there below in the two little divisions of the hut lie other sleepless people, whom some evil spirit has robbed of their slumber, and who add their deep sighs to the other voices. From one room Timar heard the sigh, "Oh, thou dear Christ!" whilst from the other "Oh, Allah!" resounded.

They cannot sleep; what is there down below which keeps people awake?

Whilst Timar tried to collect his thoughts, an idea flashed through his mind which induced him to leave his couch, throw on the coat he had had over him, and descend the ladder to the ground.

At the same moment, some one in one of the rooms below had had the same thought. And when Timar, standing at the corner of the

house, uttered the name of "Almira!" under his breath, another voice from the door opening into the veranda called Almira's name too, as if one were the ghostly echo of the other.

The speakers approached each other with surprise.

The other person was Therese. "You have come down from your bed?" she asked.

"Yes; I could not sleep."

"And what did you want with Almira?"

"I will tell you the truth. The thought struck me, whether that . . . man had poisoned the dog, because she became so suddenly silent."

"Just my idea. Almira!" At the call the dog came out of the hole and wagged her tail.

"No; it's all right," said Therese. "His bed on the veranda is undisturbed. Come, Almira, I will set you free."

The great creature laid her head on her mistress's lap, and allowed her to take off the leather collar, sprang round her, licked her cheeks, and then turned to Timar, raised one of the shaggy paws, and placed it as a proof of doggish respect in his open hand. Then the



dog shook herself, stretched herself out, and, after a roll on both sides, lay quiet on the soft grass. She barked no more; they could be thoroughly satisfied that that man no longer remained on the island.

Therese came nearer to Timar. "Do you know this man?"

"I once met him in Galatz. He came on board and behaved so that I could not make up my mind whether he was a spy or a smuggler. At last I got rid of him, and that concluded our acquaintance."

"And how came you by the notion that he might have poisoned Almira?"

"To tell you the truth, every word spoken down below is audible in the garret, and as I had lain down I was forced to hear all the conversation between you."

"Did you hear how he threatened me? If I could not satisfy him, it would only cost him a single word, and we should be ruined?"

"Yes; I heard that."

"And what do you think about us? You believe that some great, nameless crime has

banished us to this island outside the world? that we drive some dubious trade, of which one cannot speak? or that we are the homeless heirs of some dishonoured name, who must hide from the sight of the authorities? Say, what do you think?"

"Nothing, my dear lady; I don't trouble my head about it. You have given me hospitable shelter for a night, and I am grateful. The storm is over; to-morrow I shall go on my way, and think no more of what I saw and heard on this island."

"I do not want you to leave us so. Without your desire you have heard things which must be explained to you. I do not know why, but from the first moment when I saw you, you inspired me with confidence, and the thought troubles me that you should leave us with suspicion and contempt: that suspicion would prevent both you and me from sleeping under this roof. The night is quiet, and suitable to the story of the secrets of a hard life. You shall form your own judgment about us; I will conceal nothing, and tell you the whole truth, and

when you have heard the history of this lonely island and this clay hut, you won't say, 'To-morrow I go away and think no more of it,' but you will come back year by year, when your business brings you near us, and rest for a night under this peaceful roof. Sit down by me on the doorstep, and listen to the story of our house."

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE HISTORY OF THE ISLANDERS.

“TWELVE years ago we lived in Pancsova, where my husband held a municipal office. His name was Bellovary; he was young, handsome, and honest, and we loved each other dearly. I was then two-and-twenty and he was thirty.

“I bore him a daughter, whom we called Noémi. We were not rich, but well off; he had his post, a pretty house, and a splendid orchard and meadow. I was an orphan when we married, and brought him some money; we were able to live respectably.

“My husband had a friend, Maxim Krisstyan, of whom he was very fond. The man who has just been here is his son, who was then thirteen, a dear, handsome, clever boy. When my little

daughter was still a baby, the fathers already began to say they would make a pair, and I was glad when the boy took the little thing's hand and asked her, "Will you be my wife?" at which the child laughed merrily.

"Krisstyan was a grain-dealer without having ever learnt regular business, but was like the speculators in a small way, who catch hold of a rope behind the great wholesale dealers, and go blindly in their wake. If the speculation succeeds, well and good; if not, they are ruined. As he always won, he thought there was nothing easier than mercantile transactions. In the spring he went round to see the crops, and made contracts with the large dealers for the grain to be delivered to them after the harvest. He had a regular customer in the wholesale merchant of Komorn, Athanasius Brazovics, who made large advances to him every spring for grain which he was to deliver in autumn at the price settled in advance, on board ship. This was a lucrative affair for Krisstyan; but I have often thought since that it was not so much trade as a game of

chance, when one sells what does not yet exist. Brazovics advanced large sums to Krisstyan, and as the latter had no real property, security was required of him. My husband went surety for him gladly—was he not a landowner and Krisstyan's friend? Krisstyan led an easy life; whilst my good man sat for hours bent over his desk, the other was at the *café*, smoking his pipe and chatting with tradespeople of his own sort. But at last God's scourge alighted on him. The year 1819 was a terrible year; in the spring the crops looked splendid over the whole country, and every one expected cheap prices. In the Banat a merchant was lucky if he could make a contract for delivery of grain at four gulden a measure. Then came a wet summer,—for sixteen weeks it rained every day; the corn rotted on its stem. In places reputed as a second Canaan, famine set in, and in autumn the price of grain rose to twenty gulden a measure; and even so there was none to be had, for the landowners kept it for seed."

"I remember it well," Timar interrupted.

"I was then just beginning my career as a ship's captain."

"Well, in that year, it happened that Maxim could not fulfil the contract he had concluded with Athanas Brazovics; the difference he had to cover made an enormous sum. What did he do then? He collected his outstanding debts, got loans from several credulous people, and disappeared in the night from Pancsova, taking his money with him, and leaving his son behind.

"He could easily do it; his whole property consisted of money, and he left nothing for which he cared. But what is the good of all the money in the world if it can make a man so bad as to care for nothing else? His debts and liabilities rested on the shoulders of those who had been his good friends, and stood security for him, and among these was my husband.

"Then came Athanas Brazovics, and required from the sureties the fulfilment of the contract. It was true that he had advanced money to the absconding debtor, and we offered to pay it



back: we could have sold half our property, and so met the obligation. But he would not hear of it, and insisted on the fulfilment of the contract; it was not how much money he had lost, but what sums we were bound to pay him. Thus he made five-fold profits; his contract gave him the right to do so. We begged and entreated him to be content with smaller gain—for it was only a question of more or less gain, not of loss—but he was inflexible; he required from the sureties the satisfaction of his claims in full. What is the use, say I, of faith and religion, and all Christian and Jewish Churches, if it is permitted to make such a demand?

“The affair came before the court; the judge gave sentence that our house, our fields, our last farthing, should be distrained, sealed, and put up to auction.

“But what is the use of the law, a human institution, if it can be possible that people should be brought to beggary by a debt of which they have never had a groschen, and fall into misery for the benefit of a third, who rises laughing from the ground?



“We tried everything to save ourselves from utter ruin. My husband went to Ofen and Vienna to beg an audience. We knew the artful deceiver who had escaped with his money was living in Turkey, and begged for his extradition, that he might be brought here to satisfy those who had presented claims against him; but we were told that there was no power to do so. Then what is the use of the Emperor, the ministers, the authorities, if they are not in a position to extend protection to their subjects in distress? After this fearful blow, which brought us all to beggary, my poor husband one night sent a bullet through his head. He would not look on the misery of his family, the tears of his wife, the pale starved face of his child, and fled from us into the grave.

“But what is a husband good for, if, when he falls into misfortune, he knows no other outlet than to quit the world himself, and leave wife and child alone behind?

“But the horrors were not yet at an end. I was a beggar and homeless; now they tried to make me an infidel. The wife of the suicide

begged her pastors in vain to bury the unhappy man. The Dean was a strict and holy man, for whom the laws of the Church were the first thought. He denied my husband a decent burial, and I had to look on while the dear form of my adored one was carried by the knacker's cart to be hastily buried in a corner of a churchyard. What are the clergy for, if they cannot relieve us of such misery as that? What is the whole world about?

"Only one thing was left; they drove me to kill myself and my child, both at once. I wrapped a shawl round the child at my breast, and went with it to the river-bank.

"I was alone. Three times I went up and down to see where the water was deepest. Then something plucked my dress and drew me back. I looked round. Who was it? The dog here—of all living beings the only friend left to me.

"It was on the shore of the Ogradina Island that this happened. On this island we had a beautiful fruit-garden and a little summer-house; but there too the official seal had been

affixed to every door, and I could only go through the kitchen and out under the trees. Then I sat down by the Danube and began to reflect. What am I? I, a human being, a woman, to be worse than an animal! Did one ever see a dog drown its young and then kill itself? No, I will not kill either myself or my child; I will live and bring it up. But how? Like the wolves or the gipsy woman, who have no home and no food. I will beg—beg of the ground, the waters, the wilderness of the forest; only not of men—never!

“My poor husband had told me of a little island which had been formed some fifty years ago in the reed-beds near Ogradina; he often went shooting there in autumn, and spoke much of a hollow rock in which he had sought shelter from bad weather. He said, ‘The island has no master; the Danube built it up for no one; the soil, the trees, the grass which grow on it belong to no one.’ If it is ownerless, this island, why should not I take possession of it? I ask it of God, I ask it of the Danube. Why should they refuse it? I will raise fruit there. How?



and what fruit? I do not know, but necessity will teach me.

“A boat remained to me which the officer had not noticed, and which, therefore, had not been seized. Noémi, Almira, and I got into it, and I rowed myself over to the ownerless island. I had never used an oar before, but necessity taught me.

“When I touched this piece of ground, a wonderful feeling took possession of me: it was as if I had forgotten what had happened to me out in the world. I was surrounded by a pleasant silence and rest, which softened my heart.

“After I had explored pasture, grove, and meadow, I knew what I should do here. In the field bees were humming, in the woods hazel-nuts were hanging, and on the surface of the river floated water-chestnuts. Crabs basked on the shore, edible snails crept up the trees, and in the marshy thickets manna was ripening. Kind Providence! Thou hast spread a table before me! The grove was full of wild fruit—seedlings; the blackbirds had brought seeds from the neighbouring island, and already the

wild apples grew rosy on the trees, and the raspberries bore a few belated berries.

“Yes, I knew what I would do on the island. I, alone, would make of it a garden of Eden. The work to be done here could be managed by a single person, one woman, and then we should live here like the first man in Paradise.

“I had found the rock with its natural grottoes, in the largest of which a layer of hay was spread, which must have served as a bed to my poor husband. I had a widow’s right to it; it was my legacy. I hushed my child to sleep there, made it a couch in the hay, and covered it with my large shawl. Then I told Almira to stay there and watch over Noémi till I came back, and rowed across to the large island again. On the veranda of my old summer-house there was an awning spread out, which I took down; it would serve as a tent or roof, and perhaps later on be used for winter clothing. I packed in it what food and vegetables I could see, and made a bundle as large as I could carry on my back. I had come to the house in a four-horse waggon richly laden; with a bundle on my back

I left it; and yet I had been neither wicked nor a spendthrift. But what if even that bundle were stolen goods? It is true that the contents were my own; but that I should carry them off, was it not theft? I hardly knew: notions of right and wrong, the legal or the illegal, were confused in my head. I fled with the bundle like a thief out of my own home. On my way through the garden I took a cutting of each of my beautiful fruit-trees, and shoots from the figs and bushes, picked up some seeds from the ground and put them in my apron; then I kissed the drooping branches of the weeping willow under which I had so often dozed and dreamed. Those happy dreams were gone for ever. I never went back there. The boat took me safely along the Danube.

“Whilst I rowed back two things fretted me. One was that there were noxious inhabitants on the island—snakes; probably some in that grotto: the thought filled me with horror and alarm for Noémi. The other anxiety was this. I can live for years on wild-honey, water-nuts, and manna fruit; my child lives

on her mother's breast ; but how shall I feed Almira ? The faithful creature cannot live on what nourishes me ; and yet I must keep her, for without Almira as a protector I should die of fright in this solitude. When I had dragged my bundle to the grotto, I saw before me the still-quivering tail of a large snake, and not far off lay its head bitten off ; Almira had eaten what lay between the head and tail. The clever beast lay before the child wagging her tail and licking her lips, as if to say, I have made a good meal. Thenceforward she made war on the snakes ; they were her daily food. In the winter she scratched them out of their holes. My friend—for so I grew to call the dog—had found her own livelihood, and freed me from the objects of my dread.

“ Oh, sir, it was an indescribable feeling, our first night alone here — no one near but my God, my child, and my dog. I cannot call it painful — it was almost bliss. I spread the linen awning over us all three, and we were only awake by the twitter of the birds. Now began my work—savage's work, for before sun-



rise I must collect manna, called by Hungarians 'Dew-millet.' Poor women go out into the swamp, where this bush with its sweet seeds luxuriates; they hold up their dress in both hands, shake the bush, and the ripe seeds fall into their lap. That is the bread from heaven for those whom no one feeds. Sir, I lived two whole years on that bread, and thanked daily on my knees Him who cares for the birds of the air. Wild fruit, honey, nuts, crabs, wild fowls' eggs, water-chestnuts preserved for winter use, land snails, dried mushrooms, formed my food. Praised be the Lord, who so richly provides the table of His poor! And during the whole time I laboured for the object I had set before me. I grafted the wild stocks with the cuttings I had brought, and planted in the cultivated soil fruit-trees, vines, and walnut-seeds. On the south side I sowed cotton-plant and silky swallow-wort, whose products I wove on a loom made of willow-wood, and made clothes for us. From rushes and reeds I made hives, in which I housed swarms of wild bees, and even in the first year I could begin a trade in



wax and honey. Millers and smugglers often came here; they helped me with the hard labour, and never did me any harm. They paid me for provisions by their work; they knew already that I never took money. When the fruit-trees began to bear, then I lived in luxury, for in this alluvial soil all trees flourish, so that it is a pleasure to see them. I have pears which ripen their fruit twice in a year; all the young ones make fresh shoots at St John's day, and the others bear every year. I have learnt their secrets, and know that in the hands of a good gardener there should be no failure nor over-crop. Animals understand the language of man, and I believe that trees too have ears and eyes for those who tend them kindly and listen to their private wishes; and they are proud to give them pleasure in return. Oh, trees are very sensible! a soul dwells in them. I consider that man a murderer who cuts down a noble tree.

"These are my friends. I love them, and live in and by them. What they yield me year by year is fetched away by the people of

the villages and mills round, who give me in exchange what I need for my housekeeping. I have no use for money, and I have a horror of it—the accursed money, which drove me out of the world and my husband out of life : I don't want ever to see it again.

“ But I am not so foolish as to be unprepared for some years of failure, which make vain the work of man. There might be late frosts or hail-storms, which would destroy the blessings of the season ; but I am prepared for such bad times. In the cellar of my rock and in its airy crevices I store away whatever durable wares I possess—wine in casks, honey in pots, wool and cotton in bales, in sufficient quantity to keep us from want for two years. You see I have some savings, though not in money ; I may call myself rich, and yet for twelve years not a single coin has passed through my hands. For I have lived on this island twelve years, sir, with the other two, for I count Almira as a person. Noémi declares we are four ; she counts Narcissa, too—silly child !

“ Many people know of our existence, but

treachery is unknown here. The artificial barrier which exists between the frontiers of the two countries has made the people about here very reserved. No one meddles in a stranger's affairs, and every one instinctively keeps secret what he knows. No intelligence from here ever reaches Vienna, Ofen, or Stamboul. And why should they inform against me? I am in nobody's way, and do no harm; I grow fruit on my bit of desert land, which has no master. God the Lord and the royal Danube gave it to me, and I thank them for it daily. I thank Thee, my God! I thank Thee, my King!

"I hardly know if I have any religion; it is twelve years since I saw a priest or a church. Noémi knows nothing about it. I have taught her to read and write: I tell her of God, and Jesus, and Moses, as I know them. Of the good, all-merciful, omnipresent God—of Jesus, sublime in His sufferings, and divine in His humanity—and of Moses, that leader of a people to liberty, who preferred to wander hungry and thirsty in the wilderness rather than exchange

freedom for the flesh-pots of slavery—Moses who preached goodness and brotherly love—of these as I picture them to myself. But of the relentless God of vengeance, the God of the chosen people—a God calling for sacrifices, and dwelling in temples,—of that privileged Christ asking for blind faith, laying heavy burdens on our shoulders, followed by a crowd of worshippers,—and of the avaricious, revengeful, selfish Moses, of whom books and preachers tell;—of these she knows nothing.

“Now you know who we are, and what we are doing here, you shall learn with what we are threatened by this man.

“He is the son of the man for whom my husband stood surety, who drove him to suicide, on whose account we have fled from human society into the desert. He was a boy of thirteen when we lost our all, and the blow fell on him also, for his father had forsaken him.

“Indeed, I do not wonder that the son has turned out such a wretch. Abandoned by his own father, thrust out like a beggar into the

world, cast on the compassion of strangers, deceived and robbed by the one on whom his childish trust was placed, branded in his earliest youth as the son of a rogue, is it surprising if he was forced to become what he is?

“And yet I hardly know what to think of him; but what I do know is enough. The people who come to the island can tell a great deal about him. Not long after his father had escaped, he also started from Turkey, saying he was going to look for his father. Some maintained that he had found him, others that he had never been able to trace him. According to one report he robbed his own father and squandered the money he stole, but no one knows for certain. From him nothing can be learnt, for he tells nothing but lies. As to where he has been, and what he has done, he relates romances, in whose invention he is so well versed, and which he presents so skilfully, that he staggers even those who have actual knowledge of the facts, and makes them doubt the testimony of their own eyes. You see him here to-day and there to-morrow. In Turkey, Wallachia, Po-

land, and Hungary he has been met. In all these countries he is by way of knowing every person of distinction. Whomsoever he meets he takes in, and whoever has once been deceived by him may be sure it will happen again. He speaks ten languages, and whatever countryman he pretends to be, he is accepted as such. He appears now as a merchant, then a soldier, again as a seafaring man; to-day a Turk, to-morrow a Greek. He once came out as a Polish count, then as the betrothed of a Russian princess, and again as a quack doctor, who cured all maladies with his pills. What his real profession may be no one knows. But one thing is certain, he is a paid spy. Whether in the service of the Turks, Austrians, or Russians, who can tell? Perhaps he is in the pay of all three and more besides—he serves each, and betrays all. Every year he comes several times to this island. He comes in a boat from the Turkish shore, and goes in the same boat from here to the Hungarian bank. Of what he does there I have no idea; but I am inclined to believe that he inflicts the torture of his presence on me for



his own amusement. I know, too, that he is an epicure and a sensualist: he finds good food here, and a blooming young girl whom he loves to tease by calling her his bride. Noémi hates him; she has no idea how well founded is her abhorrence.

“Yet I do not think that Theodor Krisstyan visits this island only for these reasons; it must have other secrets unknown to me. He is a paid spy, and has a bad heart besides; he is rotten to the core, and ripe for any villainy. He knows that I and my daughter have only usurped the island, and that by law I have no claim to it, and by the possession of this secret he lays us under contribution, vexes and torments us both.

“He threatens that if we do not give him what he wants, he will inform against us both in Austria and Turkey, and as soon as these Governments know that a new piece of land has been formed in the midst of the Danube, which is not included in any treaty, a dispute about its jurisdiction will commence between the countries, and until its conclusion all the

inhabitants will be warned off, as happened in the case of Allion castle and the Czerna river.

“It would only cost this man a word to annihilate all that I have brought to perfection by my twelve years’ labour; to turn this Eden, where we are so happy, back into a wilderness, and thrust us out anew, homeless, into the world. Yes, and more still. We have not only to fear discovery by the imperial officials, but discovery by the priest. If the archbishops, the patriarchs, archimandrite, and deans, learnt that a girl is growing up here who has never seen a church since she was baptised, they would take her away by force and put her in a convent. Now, sir, do you understand those sighs which kept you awake?”

Timar gazed at the full disc of the moon, which was beginning to sink behind the poplars. “Why,” thought he to himself, “am I not a man of influence?”

“So this wretch,” continued Therese, “can throw us into poverty any day. He need only give information in Vienna or Stamboul that



here on the Danube a new territory exists, and we should be ruined. No one here would betray us—he alone is capable of it. But I am prepared for the worst. The whole foundation of this island is solely and entirely formed by the rock: it alone stems the force of the Danube current. In the year when Milos made war against the Serbs, some Servian smugglers hid three barrels of blasting-powder in the bushes near here, and no one has ever fetched them away. Perhaps those who hid them were taken prisoners by the Turks, or killed. I found them, and have concealed them in the deepest cavity of this great rock. Sir, if they try to drive me from this island, now ownerless, I shall thrust a burning match into the powder, and the rock and all upon it will be blown into the air. In the next spring, after the ice has melted, no one would find a trace of the island. And now you know why you could not sleep well here.”

Timar leant his head on his hand and looked away.

“There is one more thing I ought to say,”

said Frau Therese, bending close to Timar, that he might hear her low whisper,—“ I fancy this man had another reason for coming here and vanishing again, besides his having gambled away his money in some low pot-house, and wanting to get more out of me. His visit was either on your account, or that of the other gentleman. Be on your guard, if either of you dreads the discovery of a secret.”

The moon disappeared behind the poplars, and it began to dawn in the east. Blackbirds commenced their song; it was morning. From the Morova Island long-drawn trumpet-calls sounded, to awake the seafaring folk. Steps were audible in the sand; a sailor came from the landing-place with the news that the vessel was ready for departure, the wind had gone down, and they could proceed. The guests came out of the little dwelling: Euthemio Trikaliss and his daughter, the beautiful Timéa, with her dazzling pale face.

Noémi also was up and boiling fresh goat's milk for breakfast, with roasted maize instead of coffee, and honey for sugar. Timéa took

none, but let Narcissa drink the milk instead, who did not despise the stranger's offer, to Noémi's great vexation.

Trikaliss asked Timar where the stranger had gone who came last evening? Timar told him he had left in the night. At this intelligence his face fell.

Then they all took leave of their hostess. Timéa was out of sorts, and still complained of feeling unwell. Timar remained behind, and gave Therese a bright Turkish silk scarf as a present for Noémi; she thanked him, and said the child should wear it. Then they took the path leading to the boat, and Therese and Almira accompanied them to the shore. But Noémi went up to the top of the rock: there, sitting on soft moss and stonecrop, she watched the boat away.

Narcissa crept after her, cowered in her lap, and crept with bending neck into her bosom. "Be off, faithless one! that is how you love me. You leave me in the lurch, and make up to the other girl, just because she is pretty and I am not. Go! I don't love you any longer!"

and then she caught the coaxing cat with both hands to her breast, pressed her smooth chin on the white head of the little flatterer, and gazed after the boat. In her eye glittered a tear.

## CHAPTER IX.

ALI TSCHORBADSCI.

THE following day the St Barbara continued her voyage with a fair wind up the Hungarian Danube. Until evening nothing remarkable occurred, and all went to bed early; they agreed that the previous night no one had been able to sleep. But this night also was to be a wakeful one for Timar. All was quiet on board the ship, which lay at anchor—only the monotonous splash of the wavelets against the vessel broke the stillness; but amidst the silence it seemed to him as if his neighbour was busy with important and mysterious affairs. From the neighbouring cabin, which was only divided from his by a wooden partition, came all sorts of sounds; the clank of

money, a noise as of drawing a cork and stirring with a spoon, as of one clasping his hands and performing his ablutions there in the darkness, and then again those sighs, as in the previous night, "Oh, Allah !"

At last there was a gentle knocking at the partition. Trikaliss called—"Come to me here, sir."

Timar dressed quickly and hastened into the cabin. There were two beds, and between them a table. The curtains were closed in front of one, and on the other lay Euthemio. On the table stood a casket and two small glasses. "What are your orders, sir?" asked Timar.

"I have no orders,—I entreat."

"You want something?"

"I shall not want anything long. I am dying; I want to die,—I have taken poison. Don't give the alarm,—sit down and listen to what I have to tell you. Timéa will not wake. I have given her opium to send her into a deep sleep, for she must not wake up now. Don't interrupt; what you would say is useless, but I have much to tell you, and only one short

hour left, for the poison acts quickly. Make no vain attempts to save me. I hold the antidote in my hand—if I repented of my deed it rests with me to undo it. But I will not—and I am right—so sit down and listen.

“My true name is not Euthemio Trikaliss but Ali Tschorbadschi. I was once governor of Candia, and then treasurer in Stamboul. You know what is passing in Turkey now. The Ulemas and governors are rising against the Sultan, because he is making innovations. At such times men's lives are of little value. One party murders by thousands those who are not its allies, and the other party burns by thousands the houses of those in power. No one is high enough to be safe from his rulers or his slaves. The Kaimakan of Stamboul had at least six hundred respectable Turks strangled there, and then was stabbed by his own slave in the Mosque of St Sophia. Every change cost human blood. When the Sultan went to Edren, twenty-six important men were arrested, and twenty of them beheaded, while the other six were stretched on the rack.



After they had made false accusations against the great men of the country in order to save themselves, they were strangled; then those were arrested against whom they had borne witness, and these suspected nobles disappeared without being heard of again. The Sultan's secretary, Waffat Effendi, was sent to Syria, and murdered by the Druses. The Pasha Pertao was invited to dinner by the governor of Edren, Emin Pasha; when the meal was over, black coffee was brought, and he was told that the Sultan commanded him to take poison in it. Pertao only asked that he might be allowed to mix the poison he had with him in the coffee, as it was more certain; then he blessed the Sultan, performed his ablutions, prayed and died. Even in these days every Turkish noble carries poison in his signet-ring, to have it at hand when his turn comes.

"I knew in good time when my turn was coming. Not that I was a conspirator, but for two reasons I was ripe for the sickle; these reasons were my money and my daughter.

"The treasury wanted my treasures and the



seraglio my daughter. Death is easy, and I am ready for it; but I will not let my daughter go into the harem, nor myself be made a beggar. I determined to upset the calculations of my enemies and fly with my daughter and my property; but I could not go by sea, for the new galleys would have overtaken me. I had kept a passport for Hungary in readiness for a long time; I disguised myself as a Greek merchant, shaved off my long beard, and reached Galatz by by-roads. From there I could go no farther by land; I therefore hired a vessel and loaded it with grain which I bought: in this way I could best save my wealth. When you told me the name of the ship's owner I was very glad, for Athanas Brazovics is a connection of mine; Timéa's mother was a Greek of his family. I have often shown kindness to this man, and he can return it now. Allah is great and wise—no man can escape his fate. You guessed I was a fugitive, even if you were not clear whether you had a criminal or a political refugee on board—still you thought it your duty as com-

mander of the vessel to help the passenger intrusted to you in his speedy escape. By a miracle we traversed safely the rocks and whirlpools of the Iron Gate; by foolhardy audacity we eluded the pursuit of the Turkish brigantine; by lucky chance we escaped quarantine and the search at the custom-house,—and after we had left every bugbear behind, I stumbled over a straw under my feet into my grave.

“That man who followed us last evening to the unknown island was a spy of the Turkish Government. I know him, and he certainly recognised me; no one could have traced me except himself. He has hurried on in front, and at Pancsova they are ready to receive me. Don’t speak,—I know what you mean; you think it is Hungarian territory, and that Governments grant no extradition of political refugees.

“But they would not pursue me as a political criminal, but as a thief,—unjustly—for what I took was my own, and if the State has claims on me, there are my twenty-seven houses in Galatz, by which they can be satisfied; but in

spite of that they will cry after me 'Catch thief!'

"I pass for one who has robbed the treasury, and Austria gives up escaped thieves to Turkey if the Turkish spies succeed in tracing them. This man has recognised me and sealed my fate."

Heavy drops of perspiration stood on the speaker's brow. His face had turned as yellow as wax.

"Give me a drink of water that I may go on, for I have still much to tell you. I cannot save myself, but by dying I can save my daughter and her property. Allah wills it, and who can flee from His presence? So swear to me by your faith and your honour that you will carry out my instructions. First, when I am dead, do not bury me on shore—a Mussulman does not require Christian burial, so bury me like a sailor; sew me up in a piece of sail-cloth, and fasten at my head and feet a heavy stone, then sink me where the Danube is deepest. Do this, my son; and when it is done, steer steadily for Komorn, and take care of Timéa!

“Here in this casket is money—about a thousand ducats; the rest of my property is in the sacks packed as grain. I leave on my table a note which you must keep. I declare therein that I have contracted dysentery by immoderate enjoyment of melons, and am dying of it; further, that my whole possessions were only these thousand ducats. This will serve you as a security that no one may accuse you of having caused my death or embezzled my money. I give you nothing; what you do is of your own kind heart, and God will reward you: He is the best creditor you can have. And then take Timéa to Athanas Brazovics and beg him to adopt my daughter. He has a daughter himself who may be a sister to her. Give him the money,—he must spend it on the education of the child; and give over to him also the cargo, and beg him to be present himself when the sacks are emptied. There is good grain in them, and it might be changed. You understand!”

The dying man looked in Timar's face, and struggled for breath. “For——” Again speech

failed him. "Did I say anything? I had more to say—but my thoughts grow confused. How red the night is! How red the moon is in the sky! Yes; the Red Crescent——" A deep groan from Timéa's bed attracted his attention and gave another turn to his thoughts. He raised himself anxiously in his bed, and sought with a trembling hand for something under his pillow, his eyes starting from their sockets. "Ah, I had almost forgotten—Timéa! I gave her a sleeping-draught—if you do not wake her up in time she will sleep for ever. Here in this bottle is an antidote. As soon as I am dead, take it and rub her brow, temples, and chest, until she awakes. Ah! how nearly I had taken her with me! but no, she must live. Must she not? You vow to me by all you hold sacred, that you will wake her and bring her back to life—that you will not let her slumber on into eternity?"

The dying man pressed Timar's hand convulsively to his breast: on his distorted features was already imprinted the last death-struggle. "What was I talking of? What had I to

tell you? What was my last word? Yes; right—the Red Crescent!”

Through the open window the half-circle of the waning moon shone blood-red, rising from the nocturnal mists. Was the dying man in his delirium thinking of this? Or did it remind him of something?

“Yes—the Red Crescent,” he stammered once more; then the death-throes closed his lips—one short struggle, and he was a corpse.



## CHAPTER X.

## THE LIVING STATUE.

TIMAR remained alone with a dead body, with a person sunk in a deathlike stupor, and with a buried secret. The silent night covered them, and the shades whispered to him, "See! if you do not do what has been committed to you—if you throw the corpse into the Danube, and do not wake the slumberer but let her sleep on quietly into the other world—what would happen then? The spy will have already given evidence in Pancsova against the fugitive Tschorbadschi; but if you anticipate him and land at Belgrade instead, and lay information there, then, according to Turkish law, a third of the refugee's property would fall to you; otherwise it would belong to no one. The

father is dead, the girl, if you do not rouse her, will never wake again ; thus you would become at one stroke a rich man. Only rich people are worth anything in this world—poor devils are only fit for clerks.”

Timar answered the spirits of the night—  
“ Well, then, I will always remain a clerk ;”  
and, in order to silence these murmuring shadows, he closed the shutters. A secret anxiety beset him when he saw the red moon outside ; it seemed as if all these bad suggestions came from it, as well as an explanation of the last words of the dying man about the Red Crescent.

He drew back the curtain from Timéa’s berth.

The girl lay like a living statue ; her bosom rose and fell with her slow breathing—the lips were half open, the eyes shut ; her face wore an expression of unearthly solemnity. One hand was raised to her loosened hair, the other held the folds of her white dress together on her breast.

Timar approached her as if she were an enchanted fairy, whose touch might cause deadly heart-sickness to a poor mortal. He began to



rub the temples of the sleeper with the fluid from the bottle. In doing so, he looked continually in her face, and thought to himself, "What, should I let you die, you angelic creature? If the whole ship were filled with real pearls, which would be mine after your death, I could not let you sleep away your life. There is no diamond in the world, however precious, that I should prefer to your eyes when you open them."

The lovely face remained unchanged, in spite of the friction on brow and temples; the delicate meeting eyebrows did not contract when touched by a strange man's hand. The directions were that also over the heart the antidote must be applied. Timar was obliged to take the girl's hand, in order to draw it away from her breast: the hand made no smallest resistance; it was stiff and cold, as cold as the whole form—beautiful and icy as marble.

The shadows whispered—"Behold this exquisite form! a lovelier has never been touched by mortal lips; no one would know if you kissed her."

But Timar answered himself in the darkness, "No — you have never stolen anything of another's in your life. This kiss would be a theft." And then he spread the Persian quilt, which the girl had thrown off in her sleep, over her whole person up to her neck, and rubbed above the heart of the sleeper with wetted fingers, whilst, in order to resist temptation, he kept his eyes fixed on the maiden's face. It was to him like an altar-picture—so cold, yet so serene.

At last the lids unclosed, and he met the gaze of her dark but dull eyes. She breathed more easily, and Timar felt her heart beat stronger under his hand; he drew it away. Then he held the bottle with the strong essence for her to smell. Timéa awoke, for she turned her head away from it, and drew her brows together. Timar called her gently by name.

The girl started up, and with the cry "Father!" sat up on her bed, gazing out with staring eyes. The Persian quilt fell down from her lap, the night-dress slipped from her shoulders. She looked more like a Greek marble than a sentient being.

"Timéa!" and as he spoke he drew the fine linen over her bare shoulders. She did not answer. "Timéa!" cried Timar; "your father is dead." But neither face nor form moved, nor did she notice that her night-dress had left her bosom uncovered. She seemed totally unconscious.

Timar rushed into the other cabin, returned with a coffee-pot, and began in feverish haste, and not without burning his fingers, to heat some coffee. When it was ready, he went to Timéa, took her head on his arm and pressed it to him, opened her mouth with his fingers, and poured some coffee in. Hitherto he had only had to contend with passive resistance; but as soon as Timéa had swallowed the hot and bitter decoction of Mocha, she pushed Timar's hand with such strength that the cup fell; then she drew the quilt over her, and her teeth began to chatter.

"Thank God! she lives; for she is in a high fever," sighed Timar. "And now for a sailor's funeral."

## CHAPTER XI.

## A BURIAL AT SEA.

ON the ocean this is managed very easily : the body is sewn up in a piece of sail-cloth, and a cannon-ball is suspended to the feet, which sinks the corpse in the sea. Corals soon grow over the grave. But on a Danube craft, to throw a dead person into the river is a great responsibility. There are shores, and on the shores villages and towns, with church bells and priests, to give the corpse his funeral-toll and his rest in consecrated ground. It won't do to pitch him into the water, without a "By your leave," just because the dead man wished it.

But Timar knew well enough that this must be done, and it caused him no anxiety. Before

the vessel had weighed anchor, he said to his pilot that there was a corpse on board—Trikaliss was dead.

“I knew for certain,” said Johann Fabula, “that there was bad luck on the way, when the sturgeon ran races with the ship—that always betokens a death.”

“We must moor over there by the village,” answered Timar, “and seek out the minister to bury him. We cannot carry the body on in the vessel—we should be under suspicion as infected with plague.”

Herr Fabula cleared his throat violently, and said, “We can but try.”

The village of Plesscovacz, which was nearest at hand, is a wealthy settlement; it has a Dean, and a fine church with two towers. The Dean was a tall handsome man, with a long curling beard, eyebrows as broad as one's finger, and a fine sonorous voice. He happened to know Timar, who had often bought grain from him, as the Dean had much produce to sell.

“Well, my son,” cried the Dean, as soon as he saw him in the courtyard, “you might have

chosen your time better. The harvest was bad, and I have sold my crops long ago." (And yet there was threshing going on in yard and barn.)

"But this time it is I who bring a crop to market," Timar answered. "We have a dead man on board, and I have come to beg your reverence to go over there, and bury the corpse with the usual ceremonies."

"Oh, but, my son, that's not so easy. Did this Christian confess? Has he received the last sacraments? Are you certain that he was not a heretic? For if not, I cannot consent to bury him."

"I know nothing about it. We don't carry a father-confessor on board, and the poor soul left the world without any priestly assistance—that is the lot of sailors. But if your reverence cannot grant him a consecrated grave, give me at any rate a written certificate that I may have some excuse to his friends why I was not in a position to show him the last honours; then we will bury him ourselves somewhere on the shore."



The Dean gave him a certificate of the refusal of burial; but then the peasant threshers began to make a fuss. "What! bury a corpse within our boundaries which has not been blessed? Why, then, as certain as the Amen to the Paternoster, the hail would destroy our crops. And you need not try to bestow him on any other village. Wherever he came from, nobody wants him, for he's sure to bring a hailstorm this season before the vintage is over—the farmer's last hope; and then next year a vampire will rise from a corpse so buried, which will suck up all the rain and the dew."

They threatened to kill Timar if he brought the body ashore. And in order that he might not bury it secretly on the bank, they chose four stout fellows, who were to go on board the ship and remain there till it had passed the village boundaries, and then he could do what he liked with the dead man.

Timar pretended to be very angry, but allowed the four men to go on board. Meanwhile the crew had made a coffin and laid the body

in it : there was nothing more to do but to nail the lid down.

The first thing that the captain did was to go and see how Timéa was. The fever had reached its highest point ; her forehead was burning, but her face still dazzling white. She was unconscious, and knew nothing of the preparations for the burial.

“ Yes, that will do,” said Timar, and fetched a paint-pot and busied himself in marking Euthemio Trikaliss’s name and date of death in beautiful Greek letters on the coffin-lid. The four Servian peasants stood behind and spelt out what he wrote.

“ Now, then, you paint a letter or two while I see to my work,” said Timar to one of the gazers, and handed him the brush. The man took it and painted on the board an X, which the Servians use like S, to show his skill.

“ See what an artist you are !” Timar said, admiringly, and got him to draw another letter. “ You are a clever fellow. What is your name ? ”

“ Joso Berkics.”



“And yours?”

“Mirko Jakerics.”

“Well, God bless you! Let us drink a glass of Slivovitz.” They had nothing against the proposition. “I am called Michael; my surname is Timar—a good name, and sounds just the same in Hungarian, Turkish, or Greek,—call me Michael.”

“Egbogom Michael.”

Michael ran constantly into the cabin to see after Timéa. She was still very feverish, and knew no one. But that did not discourage Timar: his idea was that whoever travels on the Danube has a whole chemist's shop at hand, for cold water cures all maladies. His whole system consisted in putting cold compresses on head and feet, and renewing them as soon as they got hot. Sailors had already learnt this secret before Priessnitz the hydro-path. The St Barbara floated quietly all day up-stream along the Hungarian bank. The Servians soon made friends with the crew, helped them to row, and in return had a thieves' roast offered them from the galley.

The dead man lay out on the upper deck ; they had spread a white sheet over him—that was his shroud. Towards evening Michael told his men that he would go and lie down for a spell—he had had no sleep for two nights ; but that the vessel might as well go on being towed till it was quite dark, and then they could anchor. He had no sleep that night either. Instead of going into his own cabin, he stole quietly into Timéa's, placed the night-lamp in a box, that its light might not disturb her, and sat the whole time by the sick girl's bed listening to her delirious fancies and renewing her compresses. He never shut his eyes. He heard plainly when the anchor went down and the ship was brought up ; and then how the waves began to plash against the sides ! The sailors tramped about the deck for some time, then one by one they turned in. But at midnight he heard a dull knocking. That sounds, thought he, like hammering in nails whose head has been covered with cloth to muffle the sound. Before long he heard a noise like the fall of some heavy object into the water, then all was still.

Michael remained awake, and waited till it was light and the vessel had started again. When they had been an hour on their way, he came out of the cabin. The girl slept quietly, the fever had ceased.

"Where is the coffin?" was his first question.

The Servians came up with a defiant air. "We loaded it with stones and threw it into the water, so that you might not bury it anywhere ashore and bring bad luck on us!"

"Rash men! what have you done? Do you know that I shall be arrested and have to render an account of my vanished passenger? They will accuse me of having put him out of the way. You must give me a certificate in which you acknowledge what you did. Which of you can write?"

Naturally, not one of them knew how to write.

"What! You Berkies, and you Jakerics, did you not help me to paint the letters on the coffin?"

Then they came out with a confession that each only knew how to write the one letter

which he had painted on the lid, and that only with the brush and not with a pen.

“Very well; then I shall take you on to Pancsova. There you can give evidence verbally to the Colonel in my favour; he will find your tongues for you.”

At this threat suddenly every one of them had learnt to write; not only those two, but the others as well. They said they would rather give a certificate at once than be taken on to Pancsova. Michael fetched ink, pen, and paper, made one of these skilful scribes lie on his stomach on the deck, and dictated to him the deposition in which they all declared that, out of fear of hailstorms, they had thrown the body of Euthemio Trikaliss into the Danube whilst the crew slept, and without their knowledge or aid.

“Now, sign your names to it, and where each of you lives, so that you may be easily found if a commission of inquiry is sent to make a report.”

One of the witnesses signed himself “Ira Karakassalovics,” living at “Gunerovac,” and

the other "Nyegro Stiriapicz," living at "Med-velincz."

And now they took leave of each other with the most serious faces in the world, without either Michael or the four others allowing it to be seen what trouble it cost them not to laugh in each other's faces.

Michael then put them all ashore.

Ali Tschorbadschi lay at the bottom of the Danube, where he had wished to be.

## CHAPTER XII.

## AN EXCELLENT JOKE.

IN the morning when Timéa awoke, she felt no more of her illness; the strength of youth had won the victory. She dressed and came out of the cabin. When she saw Timar forward she went to him and asked, "Where is my father?"

"Fräulein, your father is dead."

Timéa gazed at him with her great melancholy eyes; her face could hardly become paler than it was already. "And where have they put him?"

"Fräulein, your father rests at the bottom of the Danube."

Timéa sat down by the bulwarks and looked silently into the water. She did not speak, or weep; she only looked fixedly into the river.

Timar thought it would lighten her heart if he spoke words of consolation to her. "Fräulein, whilst you were ill and unconscious, God called your father suddenly to himself. I was beside him in his last hour. He spoke of you, and commissioned me to give you his last blessing. By his wish I am to take you to an old friend of his, with whom you are connected through your mother, who will adopt you and be a father to you. He has a pretty young daughter, a little older than you, who will be your sister. And all that is on board this vessel belongs to you by inheritance, left to you by your father. You will be rich; and think gratefully of the loving father who has cared for you so kindly."

Timar's throat swelled as he thought, "And who died to secure your liberty, and killed himself in order to endow you with the joys of life."

And then he looked with surprise into the girl's face. Timéa had not changed a feature while he spoke, and no tear had fallen. Michael thought she was ashamed to cry before a stran-

ger, and withdrew ; but the maiden did not weep even when alone. Curious ! when she saw the white cat drowned, how her tears flowed ! and now, when told that her father lies below the water, not a drop falls.

Perhaps those who break out in tears at some small emotion brood silently over a deep grief ?

It may be so. Timar had other things to do than to puzzle his head over psychological problems. The towers of Pancsova began to rise in the north, and down the stream came an Imperial barge, straight for the St Barbara, with eight armed Tschaikists, their captain, and a provost. When they arrived they made fast to the side without waiting for permission, and sprang on deck. The captain approached Timar, who was waiting for him at the door of the cabin. "Are you in command of this vessel ?"

"At your service."

"On board this ship, under the false name of Euthemio Trikaliss, there is a fugitive treasurer from Turkey—a pasha with stolen treasures."

"On board this vessel travels a Greek corn-merchant, of the name of Euthemio Trikaliss



not with stolen treasures but with purchased grain. The vessel was searched at Orsova, and here are the certificates. This is the first ; be so good as to read it, and see if all is not as I say. I know nothing of any Turkish pasha."

"Where is he?"

"If he was a Greek, with Abraham ; if a Turk, with Mahomet."

"What ! is he dead, then?"

"Certainly he is. Here is the second paper, containing his will. He died of dysentery."

The officer read the document, and threw side glances at Timéa, who still sat in the place where she had heard of her father's death. She understood nothing ; the language was strange to her.

"My six sailors and the steersman are witnesses of his death."

"Well, that is unlucky for him, but not for us ; if he is dead he must be buried. You will tell us where, and we shall have the body exhumed ; we have a man who can recognise it, and prove the identity of Trikaliss with Ali Tschorbadshi, and then we can at any rate lay an embargo on the stolen property. Where is he buried?"

“At the bottom of the Danube.”

“Oh! this is too much. Why there?”

“Gently now. Here is the third paper, prepared by the Dean of Plesscovacz, in whose parish the decease of Trikaliss took place, and who not only refused him a consecrated burial, but forbade me to bring the body ashore; the people insisted on our throwing it overboard.”

The captain clenched his hand angrily on the hilt of his sword. “The devil! these confounded priests! Always the most trouble with them. But at any rate you can tell me where he was thrown into the river?”

“Let me tell you everything in proper order, Herr Captain. The Plesscovaer sent four watchmen on board, who were to prevent our landing the corpse; in the night, when we were all asleep, they threw the coffin, which they had loaded with stones, into the Danube without the knowledge of the crew. Here is the certificate delivered to me by the culprits; take it, search them out, take their evidence, and then let each have his well-merited punishment.”

The captain stamped with his foot, and burst into angry laughter.

"Well, that is a fine story. The discovered fugitive dies, and cannot be made responsible; the priest won't bury him; the peasants shove him into the water, and hand in a certificate signed with two names which no man ever possessed, and two places which never existed in this world. The refugee disappears under the water of the Danube, and I can neither drag the whole Danube from Pancsova to Szendre, nor get hold of the two rogues, by name Karakas-salovics and Stiriapicz. If the identity of the fugitive is not proved, I cannot confiscate the cargo. You have done that very cleverly, skipper. Cleverly planned indeed! And every thing in writing. One, two, three, four documents. I bet if I wanted the baptismal certificate of that lady there, you would produce it."

"At your orders." That Timar certainly could not produce, but he could put on such an innocent sheepish face, that the captain shook with laughter and clapped him on the shoulder.

"You are a splendid fellow, skipper. You

have saved the young lady's property for her ; for without her father I can do nothing to either her or her money. You can proceed, you clever fellow ! ”

With that he turned on his heel, and the last Tschaikiss, who had not swung round quick enough, got such a box on the ear, that the poor devil all but fell into the water ; and then he gave the word for departure.

When he was down below in the boat, he cast one searching look back ; but the skipper was still looking after him with the same sheepish face.

The cargo of the St Barbara was saved.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE FATE OF THE ST BARBARA.

THE St Barbara could now pursue her way unmolested ; and Timar had no worse misfortunes than the daily disputes with the leader of the towing-team. On the great Hungarian plains the voyage up the Danube becomes extremely wearisome ; there are no rocks, no waterfalls or old ruins, nothing but willows and poplars, which border both sides of the river. Of these there is nothing interesting to relate.

Timéa frequently did not come out of her cabin during a whole day, and not a word did her lips utter. She sat alone, and often the food they set before her was brought out again untouched. The days grew shorter, and the bright autumn weather turned to rain ; Timéa

now shut herself entirely into her cabin, and Michael heard nothing of her except the deep sighs which at night penetrated to his ear through the thin partition. But she was never heard to weep; the heavy blow which had fallen on her had perhaps covered her heart with an impenetrable layer of ice. How glowing must that love be which could melt it!

Ah, my poor friend, how came you by that thought? Why do you dream waking and sleeping of this pale face? Even if she were not so beautiful, she is so rich, and you are only a poor devil of a fellow. What is the good of a pauper like you filling all his thoughts with the image of such a rich girl? If only it were the other way, and you were the rich one and she poor! And how rich is Timéa? Timar began to reckon, in order to drive himself to despair, and turn these idle dreams out of his head. Her father left her a thousand ducats in gold and the cargo, which, according to the present market prices, must be worth, say, ten thousand ducats—perhaps she has ornaments and jewels besides—and might be counted

in Austrian paper-money of that date as worth a hundred thousand gulden; that in a Hungarian provincial town is a very rich heiress. And then Timar asked himself a riddle whose solution he could not guess.

If Ali Tschorbadschi had a fortune of eleven thousand ducats, that would not weigh more than sixteen pounds; of all metals, gold has the smallest volume in proportion to its weight. Sixteen pounds of ducats could be packed in a knapsack, which a man could carry on his back a long way, even on foot. Why was the Turk obliged to change it into grain and load a large cargo-ship with it, which would take a month and a half for its voyage, and have to struggle with storms, eddies, rocks, and shallows,—which might be delayed by quarantine and custom-houses,—when he could have carried his treasure with him in his knapsack, and by making his way cautiously on foot over mountain and river, could have reached Hungary safely in a couple of weeks?

The key to this problem was not to be found.

And another riddle was connected with this

one. If Ali's treasure (whether honestly come by or not) only consists of eleven or twelve thousand ducats altogether, why does the Turkish Government institute a pursuit on such a large scale, sending a brigantine with four-and-twenty rowers, and spies and couriers after him? What would be a heap of money for a poor supercargo, is for his Highness the Padischa only a trifle; and even if it had been possible to lay an embargo on the whole cargo, representing a value of ten or twelve thousand ducats, by the time it had passed through the fingers of all the informers, tax-collectors, and other official cut-purses, there would be hardly enough left for the Sultan to fill his pipe with.

Was it not ridiculous to set such great machinery in motion in order to secure so small a prize?

Or was it not so much the money as Timéa that was the object? Timar had enough romance about him to find this a plausible assumption, however little it agreed with a supercargo's one-times-one multiplication table.

One evening the wind dispersed the clouds,



and when Timar looked out of his cabin window he saw on the western horizon the crescent moon.

The "red moon" !

The glowing sickle seemed to touch the glassy surface of the Danube. It looked to Timar as if it really had a human face, as it is depicted in the almanacs, and as if it said something to him with its crooked mouth. Only that he could not always understand—it is a strange language.

Moonstruck people perhaps comprehend it, for they follow it; only they, as well as the sleep-walkers, remember nothing of what was said when they awake. It was as if the moon answered Timar's questions. Which? All. And the beating of his heart? or his calculations? All.

Only that he could not put these answers into words.

The red crescent dipped slowly towards the water, and sent its reflected rays along the waves as far as the ship's bows, as if to say, "Don't you understand now?" At last it drew

its horns gently below the surface, saying plainly, "I shall return to-morrow, and then you will know."

The pilot was in favour of making the most of the light of the after-glow to go on farther, until it grew dark. They were already above Almas, and not far from Komorn; in those parts he knew the channel so well that he could have steered the vessel safely with his eyes shut. As far up as the Raab Danube, there was no more danger to fear.

And yet there was something! Off Fuzito a soft dull thud was heard; but at this thud the steersman cried "Halt!" in a fright, to the towing-team.

Timar also grew pale, and stood petrified for a moment. For the first time during the whole voyage dismay was depicted in his features. "We have struck a snag!" he cried to the steersman.

And that great strong man entirely lost his head, left the rudder, and ran crying like a little child across the deck to the cabin.

We have touched a snag! Yes, that was so.

When the Danube is in flood it makes breaches in the bank, the uprooted trees fall into the current and are carried to the bottom by the weight of the soil clinging to their roots ; if a cargo-ship drawn by horses touches such a tree-trunk, it pierces the hull. From shallows and rocks the steersman can guard his vessel, but against a tree-trunk lying in ambush under water, neither knowledge, experience, nor skill is of any avail. Most of the shipwrecks on the Danube are from this cause.

"It is all up with us !" howled the pilot and the sailors ; every one left his post and ran for his bundle and his chest, to get them into the boat.

The vessel swung across the stream, and the forepart began to sink. It was useless to think of saving it—absolutely impossible. The hold was filled with sacks of grain ; before they could shift these in order to get at the leak and stop it, the vessel would long ago have gone down.

Timar broke in the door of Timéa's cabin.

"Fräulein, put on your cloak quickly, and take the casket which stands on the table ; our

ship is sinking, we must save ourselves." As he spoke he helped her into her warm *kaftan*, and gave her directions to get into the boat; the pilot would help her. He himself ran back into his cabin to get the box which held the ship's papers and cash. But Johann Fabula was not thinking of helping Timéa; he flew into a rage when he saw the girl. "Didn't I say this milk-face, this witch with the meeting eyebrows, would bring us all to destruction? We ought to have thrown her overboard."

Timéa did not understand what he said, but she shrank from his bloodshot eyes, and preferred to go back to her cabin, where she lay down, and saw the water rush through the door and mount gradually to the level of the edge of her bed. She thought to herself that if the water washed her away, it would carry her down-stream, to where her father was lying at the bottom of the Danube, and then they would again be united.

Timar was wading up to his knees in water before he had collected all he wanted from his cabin and packed them in a box, which he

took on his shoulder and then hurried to the boat.

"And where is Timéa?" he cried, not seeing her there.

"The devil knows!" growled the pilot. "I wish she had never been born." Timar flew back into Timéa's cabin, now up to his waist in water, and took her in his arms. "Have you the casket?"

"Yes," whispered the girl.

He asked no more, but hurried with her on deck, and carried her in his arms into the boat, where he put her on the middle seat. The fate of the St Barbara was being decided with awful rapidity. The ship was going down stern first, and in a few minutes only the upper deck and the mast with the dangling tow-rope were visible above water.

"Shove off!" Timar said to the rowers, and the boat moved towards the shore.

"Where is the casket?" Timar asked the girl, when they had already gone some distance.

"Here it is," answered Timéa, showing him what she had brought away.



“Miserable girl! that is the box of sweets, not the casket.” In fact, Timéa had brought the box of Turkish sweets, meant as a present to her new sister, and had totally forgotten the casket which held her whole fortune. That was left behind in the submerged cabin. “Back to the ship!” Timar cried to the pilot.

“Surely nobody has got such a mad notion as to look for anything in a sunken ship,” grumbled Fabula.

“Back!—no words—I insist!”

The boat returned to the vessel. Timar asked no one’s help, but sprang himself to the deck and down the steps to the cabin.

Timéa looked after him with her great dark eyes as he vanished under the surface, as if to say—“And you too go before me into the watery grave.”

Timar reached the bulwarks, but had to be very careful, because the vessel had a list towards the side where Timéa’s cabin door was. He had to hold on by the timbers of the roof, so as not to slip altogether under water. He

found the door, luckily, not shut by the waves ; for it would have been a long job to get it open. It was quite dark inside, the water had filled it almost to the ceiling ; he groped to the table, the casket was not there ; perhaps she had left it on the bed. The water had floated the bed to the roof, and he had to draw it down ; but the casket was not there either. Perhaps it had been knocked over by the rush of water. He felt about vainly with his hands, stooping under water. His feet were more fortunate, for he stumbled over the object sought for ; the casket had fallen to the ground. He lifted it, and tried while holding it to climb up to the other side, where he need not hold on with both hands.

The minute that Timar was under water seemed to Timéa an eternity.

He was a full minute under water. He had held his breath the whole time, as if to try an experiment how long a man could do without breathing.

When Michael's head appeared above water she heaved a deep sigh, and her face beamed

when Timar gave her the rescued casket, but not on its account.

“Well, captain!” exclaimed the steersman, as he helped Timar into the boat, “that’s thrice you’ve got soaked for the love of these eye-brows. Thrice!”

Timéa asked Michael in a whisper, “What is the Greek for the word thrice?” Michael translated it. Then Timéa looked at him long, and repeated to herself in a low voice “Thrice.”

The boat approached the shore in the direction of Almas.

Against the steely mirror in the twilight a long line was visible, like a distressful note of exclamation or a pause in life. It was the top-mast of the St Barbara.



## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE GUARDIAN.

AT six in the evening the ship's crew had left the sunken craft, and by half-past seven Timar with Timéa was in Komorn. The post-cart driver knew Brazovics's house very well, and galloped his four bell-decked horses with unmerciful cracks of the whip through the little streets up to the square, as he had been promised a good *trinkgeld* if he brought his passengers quickly to their destination.

Michael lifted Timéa from the country wagon and told her she was now at home. Then he took the casket under his cloak and led the girl up the steps.

The house of Athanas Brazovics was of two stories, a rarity in Komorn; for in remem-

brance of the destructive earthquakes by which the town had been visited in the last century, people usually only built on the ground-floor. The lower storey was occupied by a large *café*, which served the resident tradespeople as a *casino*; the whole upper floor was inhabited by the family of the merchant. It had two entrances from the street, and a third through the kitchen.

The owner was generally not at home at this hour, as Timar knew; he therefore led Timéa straight to the door through which the women's rooms were reached. In these reigned fashionable luxury, and in the ante-room lounged a man-servant. Timar asked him to fetch his master from the *café*, and meanwhile led Timéa to the ladies.

He was certainly hardly got up for company, as may be imagined when one remembers what he had gone through, and the number of times he had been soaked; but he was one of those who belonged to the house, who could come in at any time and in any dress: they looked upon him as "one of our people." In such

a case one gets over the strict rules of etiquette.

The announcement revives the old habit of the mistress, as soon as the door of the ante-room is open, of putting her head through the parlour door to see who is coming. Frau Sophie has kept this habit ever since her maid-servant days. (Pardon, that slipped out by accident.) Well, yes, Herr Athanas raised her from a low station; it was a love-match, so no one has a right to reproach her.

It is therefore not as idle gossip, but only as a characteristic touch, that I mention that Frau Sophie even as "gracious lady" could not get rid of her early habits. Her clothes always fitted her as if they had been given to her by her mistress. From her *coiffure* an obstinate lock of hair would always stick out either in the front or at the back; even her most gorgeous costumes always looked tumbled and creased; and if nothing else went wrong, there would be invariably a pair of trodden-down shoes with which she could indulge in her old propensity. Curiosity and tattle were the

ingredients of her conversation, in which she generally introduced such extraordinary expressions that when she began to scatter them in a mixed party, the guests (that is, those who were seated) almost fell off their chairs with laughter. Then, too, she had the agreeable custom of never speaking low; her voice was a continuous scream, as if she were being stabbed and wished to call for assistance.

“Oh, good Lord, it’s Michael!” she cried, as soon as she got her head through the doorway. “And where did you get the pretty Fräulein? What is the casket you have under your arm? Come into the parlour! Look, look, Athalie, what Timar has brought!”

Michael let Timéa pass, then he entered and politely wished the company good evening. Timéa looked round with the shyness of a first meeting. Besides the mistress of the house there were a girl and a man in the room. The girl was a fully developed and conscious beauty, who, in spite of her naturally small waist, did not disdain tight stays; her high heels and piles of hair made her appear taller

than she was; she wore mittens, and her nails were long and pointed. Her expression was of artificial amiability; she had somewhat arrogant and pouting lips, a rosy complexion, and two rows of dazzling white teeth, which she did not mind showing; when she laughed, dimples formed on chin and cheek, dark brows arched over the bright black eyes, whose brilliancy was increased by their aggressive prominence. With her head up and bust thrown forward, the beautiful creature knew how to make an imposing appearance. This was Fräulein Athalie.

The man was a young officer, verging on thirty, with a cheerful open face and fiery black eyes. According to the military regulations of the period, he had a clean-shaven face, with the exception of a small crescent-shaped whisker. This warrior wore a violet tunic, with collar and cuffs of pink velvet, the uniform of the Engineers. Timar knew him too. It was Herr Katschuka, first-lieutenant at the fort, and also a commissariat officer—rather a hybrid position, but so it was.

The lieutenant has the pleasure of taking a portrait of the young lady before him in chalks ; he has already finished one by daylight, and is trying one by lamplight. The entrance of Timéa disturbs him in this artistic occupation.

The whole appearance of the slender delicate girl was something spiritual at this moment—it was as if a ghost, a phantom, had stepped out of the dusk.

When Herr Katschuka looked up from his easel, his dark - red chalk drew such a streak across the portrait's brow, that it would be hard for bread-crumbs to get it out, and he rose involuntarily from his seat before Timéa.

Every one rose at the sight of the girl, even Athalie. Who can she be ?

Timar whispered to Timéa in Greek, on which she hastened to Frau Sophie and kissed her hand, whilst the girl herself received a kiss on her cheek.

Again Timar whispered to her. The girl went with shy obedience to Athalie, and looked steadily in her face. Shall she kiss her, or fall on the neck of her new sister ? Athalie seemed

to raise her head higher still. Timéa bent to her hand and kissed it—or rather not her hand, but the kid mitten. Athalie allowed it; her eyes cast a flaming glance on Timéa's face, and another on the officer, and she curled her lip yet more.

Herr Katschuka was completely lost in admiration of Timéa.

But neither his nor Athalie's fiery looks called up any emotion on Timéa's face, which remained as white as if she were a spirit.

Timar himself was not a little confused. How was he to introduce the girl and relate how he had come by her, before this officer?

Herr Brazovics helped him out of his difficulty. With a great bustle he burst in at the door. He had just now in the *café*—to the surprise of all the regular customers—read aloud from the 'Augsburg Gazette' that the escaped pasha and treasurer, Ali Tschorbadshi and his daughter, had fled on board the St Barbara, evaded the watchfulness of the Turkish authorities, and reached Hungary in safety. The St Barbara is his ship. Tschorbadshi is a

good friend of his—even a connection by the mother's side. An extraordinary event! One can fancy how Herr Athanas threw his chair back when the servant brought him the news that Herr Timar had just arrived with a beautiful young lady, and under his arm a gilt casket.

“So it is actually true!” cried Herr Athanas, and rushed up to his own apartments, not without upsetting a few of the card-players on his way.

Brazovics was a man of enormous corpulence. His stomach was always half a step in front of him. His face was copper-coloured at its palest, and violet when he ought to have been rosy: even when he shaved in the morning his chin was all bristles by the evening, his scrubby moustache perfumed with smoke, snuff, and various spirits; his eyebrows formed a bushy wall over his prominent and bloodshot eyes. (A fearful thought, that the eyes of the lovely Athalie, when she grows old, will resemble her father's!)

When Herr Brazovics opens his mouth, one understands why Frau Sophie always screams;



her husband, too, can only speak in shouts, but with the difference that he has a deep bass voice like a hippopotamus.

Naturally Frau Sophie, when she wants to overpower his voice with her own, raises it to a yell. It was as if they had a wager which could bring on the other a lung disease or a stroke of apoplexy. It is doubtful who will win; but Brazovics always stops his ears with wool, and Frau Sophie invariably has a comforter round her throat.

Athanas rushed, panting with haste, into the ladies' room, where his voice of thunder had already preceded him. "Is Michael there with the young lady? Where is the Fräulein? Where is Michael?"

Timar hastened to catch him at the door. He might have succeeded in keeping back the man himself, but the weight of his approaching paunch, when once set in motion, bore down all obstacles.

Michael made a sign to him that a visitor was present. "Ah, that doesn't matter! You can speak openly before him. We are *en*

*famille*; the Herr Lieutenant belongs to the family. Ha! ha! don't get cross, Athalie; every one knows it. You can speak freely, Michael! it is all in the papers."

"What is in the papers?" exclaimed Athalie, angrily.

"Well, well, not you; but that my friend Ali Tschorbadshi, my own cousin, the treasurer, has fled to Hungary with his daughter and his property on board my ship the St Barbara; and this is the daughter, isn't she? The dear little thing!" And with that Herr Brazovics suddenly fell upon her, took her in his arms, and pressed two kisses on her pale face—two loud, wet, malodorous kisses, so that the girl was quite confused.

"You are a good fellow, Michael, to have brought her here so quickly. Have you given him a glass of wine? Go, Sophie—quick! A glass of wine!"

Frau Sophie pretended not to hear; but Herr Brazovics threw himself into an arm-chair, drew Timéa between his knees, and stroked her hair with his fat palms. "And where is my worthy

friend, the Governor of the Treasury? Where is he?"

"He died on the journey," answered Timar in a low voice.

"What a fatality!" said Brazovics, trying to give an angular form to his round face, and taking his hand from the girl's head. "But no accident happened to him?"

A curious question. But Timar understood it.

♥ "He intrusted his property to my care, to deliver it over to you with his daughter. You were to be her adopted father and the guardian of her property."

At these words Herr Brazovics grew sentimental again: he took Timéa's head between his two hands, and pressed it to his breast.

"As if she were my own child. I will regard her as my daughter;" and then again smack! smack! one kiss after another on brow and cheek of the poor victim. "And what is in this casket?"

"The gold I was to deliver to you."

"Very good, Michael. How much is there?"

"A thousand ducats."

“What!” cried Brazovics, and pushed Timéa off his knee; “only a thousand ducats? Michael, you have stolen the rest!”

Something stirred in Timar’s face. “Here is the autograph will of the deceased. He declares therein that he has given over to me a thousand ducats in gold, and his remaining property is contained in the cargo, which consists of ten thousand measures of wheat.”

“That’s something more like. Ten thousand measures of wheat, at twelve gulden fifty a measure in paper money, that makes a hundred and twenty-five thousand gulden, or fifty thousand gulden silver. Come here, little treasure, and sit on my knee; you’re tired, aren’t you? And did my dear never-to-be-forgotten friend send me any other directions?”

“He told me to tell you that you must be present in person when the sacks are emptied, lest they should exchange the grain, for he had bought a very good quality.”

“Naturally I shall be there in person. How should I not be? And where is the ship with the grain?”

"Below Almas, at the bottom of the Danube."

But now Athanas thrust Timéa right away, and sprang up in a rage. "What! my fine vessel gone down, as well as the ten thousand measures of wheat! Oh, you gallows-bird! you rascal! You were all drunk, for certain. I'll put you all in jail; the pilot shall be in irons; and I shall not pay one of you. You forfeit your ten thousand gulden caution-money: you shall never see that again. Go and sue me if you like."

"Your vessel was not worth more than six thousand gulden, and is insured for its full value at the Komorn Marine Insurance Office. You have come to no harm."

"If that were true a hundred times over, I should still require compensation from you, on account of the *lucrum cessans*. Do you know what that means? If you do, you can understand that your ten thousand gulden will go to the last kreuzer."

"So be it," answered Timar quietly. "We will speak of that another time; there's time enough. But what we have to do now is to

decide what is to happen to the sunken cargo, for the longer it remains under water, the more it will be spoilt."

"What does it matter to me what happens to it?"

"So you will not take it over? You will not be personally present at the discharge of cargo?"

"The devil I will! What should I do with ten thousand measures of soaked grain? I am not going to make starch of ten thousand measures of corn; or shall I make paste of it? The devil may take it if he wants it."

"Hardly; but the stuff must be sold. The millers, factors, cattle-dealers, will offer something for it, and the peasants too, who want seed-corn; and the vessel must be emptied. In that way some money may be got out of it."

"Money!" (This word could always penetrate into the cotton-stuffed ears of the merchant.)  
"Good. I will give you a permit to-morrow to empty the vessel and get rid of the cargo in bulk."

"I want the permit to-day. Before morning everything will be ruined."

"To-day! You know I never touch a pen at night; it is against my habits."

"I thought of that beforehand, and brought the permit with me. You have only to sign your name to it. Here are pen and ink."

But now Frau Sophie interrupted with a scream. "Here in my parlour I do not allow writing to be done! That's the only thing wanting—that my new carpet should be all spotted with ink. Go to your room if you want to write. And I won't have this squabbling with your people here in my rooms."

"I should like to know if it isn't my house," growled the great man.

"And it's my sitting-room!"

"I am master here!"

"And I am mistress here!"

The screeching and growling had the good result for Timar that Herr Brazovics flew into a rage, and in order to show that he was master in his own house, seized the pen and signed the power of attorney. But when he had given it,

both fell on Timar, and overwhelmed him with such a flood of reproaches and invective, that he would willingly have taken yet another bath in the Danube to wash them away. Frau Sophie only scolded Timar indirectly, as she abused her husband for giving such a ragged dirty fellow, such a tipsy beggarly scoundrel, a war-rant like that.

Why had he not given it to any other super-cargo than Timar, who would run away with the money, and drink and gamble till it was gone.

Timar stood the whole time with the same immovable calm in the midst of this tumult as that with which he had defied storm and waves at the Iron Gate. At last he broke silence: "Will you take charge of the money which belongs to the orphan, or shall I give it over to the City Orphanage?" (At this last question Brazovics got a great fright.) "Now then, if you please, come with me into the office and we will settle the affair at once, for I don't like servants' squabbles."

With this hundred-pound insult he succeeded



in suddenly silencing both master and mistress. Against such scolds and blusterers, a good round impertinence is the best remedy. Brazovics took the light and said, "All right; bring the money along." Frau Sophie appeared all at once to be in the best of tempers, and asked Timar if he would not have a glass of wine first.

Timéa was quite stunned; of what passed in a foreign language she understood not a word, and the gestures and looks which accompanied it were not calculated to enlighten her. Why should her guardian now kiss and hug her, the orphan, and the next moment push her from him? Why did he again take her on his lap, only to thrust her away once more? Why did both of them scream at this man, who remained as calm as she had seen him in the tempest, until he spoke a few words, quietly, without anger or excitement, and thereby instantly silenced and overpowered the two who had been like mad people the minute before, so that they could prevail as little against him as the rocks and whirlpools and the armed men. Of all that went on around her, she had not under-

stood one word; and now the man who had been hitherto her faithful companion, who had gone "thrice" into the water for her sake, with whom alone she could speak in Greek, was going away—for ever, no doubt—and she would never hear his voice again.

Yet no; once again it sounds in her ear. Before he stepped over the threshold Timar turned to her and said in Greek, "Fräulein Timéa, there is what you brought away with you."

And with that he took the box of sweets from under his cloak. Timéa ran to him, took the box, and hastened to Athalie, in order to present to her, with the sweetest smile, the gift she had brought from far away. Athalie opened the box.

"*Fi donc!*" she exclaimed, "it smells of rose-water, just like the pocket-handkerchiefs the maid-servants take to church."

Timéa did not understand the words, but from the pouting lips and turned-up nose, she could easily guess their meaning, and that made her very sad.

She made another attempt, and offered the Turkish sweetmeats to Frau Sophie, who declined with the remark that her teeth were bad, and she could not eat sweets. Quite cast down, she now offered them to the Lieutenant. He found them excellent, and swallowed three lumps in three mouthfuls, for which Timéa smiled at him gratefully.

Timar stood at the door and saw Timéa smile. Suddenly it occurred to her that she must offer him some of the Turkish delight. But it was already too late, for Timar no longer stood there. Soon after, the Lieutenant took leave and departed. Being a man of breeding, he bowed to Timéa also, which pleased her greatly.

After a time Herr Brazovics returned to the room, and they were now just the four alone.

Brazovics and Frau Sophie began to talk in a gibberish which was intended for Greek.

Timéa understood a word here and there, but the sense seemed to her more strange than those languages which were altogether unknown to her.

They were consulting what to do with this

girl whom they had been saddled with. Her whole property consists of twelve thousand paper gulden. Even if it were likely that the soaked grain should bring in a little more, that would not suffice to educate her like a lady, like Athalie.

Frau Sophie thought she must be treated as a servant, and get used to cook and sweep, to wash and iron—that would be some use. With so little money no one would marry her except some clerk or ship's captain, and then it would have been better for her to be brought up as a servant and not a lady.

But Athanas would not hear of it; what would people say? At last they agree on a middle course; Timéa is not to be treated like a regular servant, but take the position of an adopted child. She will take her meals with the family, but help to wait. She shall not stand at the wash-tub, but must get up her own and Athalie's fine things. She must sew what is wanted for the house, not in the maids' room but in the gentlefolk's apartments; of course she will help Athalie to dress, that

will only be a pleasure to her, and she need not sleep with the maids but in the same room as Athalie; the latter wants some one to keep her company and be at her service. In return, Athalie can give her the old clothes she no longer requires.

A girl who has only twelve thousand gulden can thank Heaven that such a fate should fall to her share.

And Timéa was satisfied with her lot. After the great and incomprehensible catastrophe which had thrown her on the world, the lonely creature clung to every being she came near. She was gentle and obliging. This is the way of Turkish girls. It pleased her to be allowed to sit by Athalie at supper, and it was not necessary to remind her: she rose of her own accord to change the plates and wash the spoons, and did it with cheerful looks and kind attention. She feared to annoy her guardians if she looked sad, and yet she had cause enough. Especially she busied herself in trying to help Athalie. Whenever she looked at her, her face showed the open

admiration which young girls feel for a grown-up beauty ; she forgot herself in gazing at the rosy cheeks and bright eyes of the other. These innocent minds think any one so lovely must be very good.

She did not understand what Athalie said, for she did not even speak bad Greek, like her parents ; but she tried to guess by her eyes and hands what was wanted. After supper, at which Timéa only ate fruit and bread, not being used to rich dishes, they went into the *salon*.

There Athalie sat down to the piano. Timéa crouched near her on the footstool and looked with admiration at her rapid execution. Then Athalie showed her the portrait which the Lieutenant had executed, and Timéa clasped her hands in astonishment.

“ You never saw anything like it ? ”

“ Where should she have seen such things ? ” answered the father. “ It is forbidden to the Turks to take a likeness of any one. That is why there is a revolution just now—because the Sultan has had his picture painted and



hung up over the divan. Ali Tschorbadshi was mixed up in the movement, and was forced to fly. You poor old Tschorbadshi, to have been such a fool!"

When Timéa heard her father's name, she kissed the hand of Brazovics. She supposed he had sent some pious blessing after the dead man.

Athalie went to bed, and Timéa carried the light for her. Athalie seated herself at her dressing-table, looked in the glass, sighed deeply, and then sank back in her chair tired and cross, with a gloomy countenance. Timéa would have liked to know why this lovely face had suddenly grown so sad.

She took the comb from Athalie's hair and loosened the plaits with a skilful hand, and then again dressed the richly flowing chestnut locks for the night in a simple coil.

She took out the earrings, and her head came so near to Athalie's that the latter could not help seeing the two contrasting faces in the mirror.

One so radiant, rosy, and fascinating, the

other so pale and soft; and yet Athalie sprang up angrily and pushed away the glass. "Let us go to sleep." The white face had thrown hers into the shade. Timéa collected the scattered clothes and folded them neatly together by instinct.

Then she knelt before Athalie and took off her stockings. Athalie permitted it.

And after Timéa had drawn them off, and held the snow-white foot, more perfect than a sculptor's ideal, in her lap, she bent and pressed a kiss on it. Athalie permitted that too.



BOOK SECOND

TIMÉA



## CHAPTER I.

### GOOD ADVICE.

LIEUTENANT KATSCHUKA went through the *café* and found Timar there gulping down a cup of black coffee. "I am soaked and frozen, and have a great deal still to do to-day," he said to the officer, who hastened to press his hand.

"Come and have a glass of punch with me."

"Many thanks, but I have no time now; I must go this instant to the insurance company, that they may help me with the salvage of the cargo; for the longer it remains under water the greater the damage. From there I must run to the magistrate, that he may be in time to send some one to Almas to receive the power of attorney; then I must go round to the cattle-dealers and carriers, to induce them to

come to the auction ; and later on I must go by the stage to Iotis to find out the starch manufacturers there : they can make the best use of the wet grain. Perhaps in this way some of the poor child's property may be saved. But I have a letter to deliver to you which was given me in Orsova."

Katschuka read the letter, and then said to Timar, " Very good, my friend. Do your business in the town, but afterwards come to me for half an hour ; I live near the 'Anglia,'—over the door hangs a shield with a large double eagle. Whilst the diligence baits we will drink a glass of punch and have a sensible talk ; be sure you come."

Timar consented, and went off to look after his business. It might be about eleven o'clock when he entered the door under the double eagle, which was near the promenade called in Komorn the "Anglia." Katschuka's private servant waited for him there, and led him up to his master's room. " Well, I expected," began Timar, " you would have been already married to Athalie long before I came up from yonder."

"Yes, comrade, but the affair doesn't get on well; it is delayed by first one thing and then another. It seems to me as if one of us is not keen about it."

"Oh! you may be sure Athalie is keen enough."

"In this world you can't be sure of anything, least of all a heart. I only say one thing, long engagements are bad. Instead of getting nearer to each other people only get farther apart, and learn to know each other's failings and weaknesses. If this occurs after marriage one thinks, in God's name, we cannot go back. Let me advise you, comrade, if you wish to marry and have fallen in love, don't wait long to think about it; for if you begin to calculate it will only end in a breach."

"With you I should fancy there is no danger in calculations about a girl who is so rich."

"Riches are relative, my friend. Believe me, every woman knows how to get rid of the interest of her dowry; and then no one exactly knows the financial position of Herr Brazovics. A heap of money goes through

his hands, but he does not like striking a proper business-like balance, so as to show what he has gained or lost by his dealings."

"For my part I think he is very well off. And Athalie is a very pretty and clever young lady."

"Yes, yes ; but you need not praise Athalie to me like a horse you take to market. Let us rather talk of your affairs."

If Katschuka had been able to look into Timar's heart, he would have found that what they had been talking of *was* his friend's affair. Timar had turned the conversation to Athalie because—because he envied the officer the smile of Timéa's face. It was as if he had said, "You have no right to Timéa's smile—you are engaged ; marry Athalie !"

"Now, let us talk of serious matters. My friend in Orsova writes me that I am to befriend you. Good ; I will try. You are in a position anything but pleasant : the ship intrusted to you is wrecked. It is not your fault, but a great misfortune for you, for every one will now fear to intrust you with a vessel.

Your principal seizes your caution-money, and who knows whether you can recover it by law. You would like to help the poor orphan—I see it in your eyes; that she should lose such a pretty fortune affects you more than any one else. How can we get out of this with one *coup*?

“I know no way out of it.”

“But I do. Listen to me; next week the annual concentration of troops begins round Komorn. Twenty thousand of them will be manœuvring here for three weeks. A contract for the bread-supply is on hand; large sums will be paid, and he who goes about it wisely will make a good haul. All the tenders go through my hands, and I can say beforehand who will get the contract, for it depends more on what is not contained in the offer than on what is. Till now Brazovics’s tender is the lowest. He is prepared to undertake the contract at 140,000 gulden, and promises ‘the officials concerned’ 20,000 gulden.”

“What do you mean?—the officials concerned?”

"Don't be so stupid. It is the usual thing that whoever receives such a large contract should give a present to those who get it for him. It has always been so since the world began. What else do we live on? You know that well enough."

"Certainly; but I never tried it in my own person."

"Very foolish of you. You burn your fingers for other people, while you might get the chestnuts out of the fire for yourself, if you knew how to do it. Send in a tender to undertake the contract at 130,000 gulden, and promise 30,000 commission."

"I cannot do that for several reasons. First, I have not got the deposit, which must accompany the tender; then I have not the capital requisite to buy such quantities of grain and flour; next, I greatly object to bribery; and lastly, I am not such a bad reckoner as to persuade myself of the possibility of undertaking with only 130,000 gulden to complete the contract as well as pay the friendly commission."

Katschuka laughed at him. "Oh, my dear



Michael, you will never be a man of business. In our line that is always the way. Only to make a groschen on a gulden is pedlar's trade. The chief thing is to have interest, and you don't want for that; that's what I am good for. We have been good friends ever since our school days: rely on me. How do you mean you have no money to deposit? Hand over the receipt for your caution-money of 10,000 gulden which you left with Brazovics—it will be regarded as a sufficient security—and then I will tell you what to do next; go quickly to Almas, and bid yourself for the sunken cargo. The grain, which represents a value of 100,000 gulden, will certainly be knocked down to you for 10,000. Then you will possess 10,000 measures of corn. You will promise all the millers in Almas, Fuzito, and Izsaer, double pay if they will grind your corn at once. Meanwhile you build ovens, in which the corn is immediately baked into bread. Within three weeks it will all be consumed, and if a bad part slips in, it will be the business of your 'good friends' to hush it up. At the end of three weeks you will have a clear

gain of at least 70,000 gulden. Believe me, if I were to take such an affair to your principal, he would seize it with both hands. I wonder at your slowness."

Timar thought it over. It was indeed a tempting offer. To make in three weeks 60,000 or 70,000 gulden—and without much trouble, in complete security. The first week the ration-bread would be rather sweeter than usual, the second week rather bitterer, and the third week rather musty. But soldiers do not look narrowly at such things; they are used to it.

But yet Timar turned with disgust from this bitter cup. "O Emerich!" he said, laying his hand on his former schoolmate's shoulder, "where have you learnt such things?"

"Why," answered the other, with a gloomy face, "there, where they are taught. When I entered on the military career, I was full of romantic illusions. They are all in ashes now. Then I thought this was the school of chivalry, the heroic career, and my heart beat high at the thought: now I know that all in this world is speculation, and that public concerns are gov-

erned by private interests. In the Engineers I had completed my studies, with remarkable, I may say distinguished, results. When I was sent to Komorn, the prospect filled me with pride, at the opportunity I should have for the development of my capacities in military engineering. The first plan for the fortifications submitted by me was declared to be a masterpiece by good judges ; but do not imagine that it was accepted : on the contrary, I received orders to prepare another, which was much more costly, and involved the expropriation of whole streets in the town. Well, I prepared that too. You will remember that part of the town which is now an open space—this change cost half a million. Your principal had some ruinous houses there which he sold at the price of palaces. And they call that fortification ! And for that I had studied engineering. Well, a man falls by degrees and finds his level. Perhaps you have heard the anecdote—it is in every mouth—how the Crown-Prince Ferdinand, when he visited us last year, said to the commandant of the fortress, ‘ I thought this fortress was black ? ’ ‘ Why

should it be black, your Imperial Highness?' 'Because in the fortification accounts there are every year 10,000 gulden put down for ink. I thought the walls must be dyed with ink.' Every one laughed, and that was the end of it. If nothing comes out, nothing is said; and if everything comes out, it only raises a laugh. You had better laugh too! Or will it please you better to be shoved out into the world from the threshold of the corn-dealer, and sell matches with two kreuzers profit a-day? I have already come down from the ethereal regions. Off, my friend, to Almas, and buy the sunken wheat. Till ten to-morrow night you will have time to send in your tender. Listen, there is the diligence—be off, and see that you get back quickly."

"I will think it over," said Timar, slowly.

"Remember that you will do the poor orphan a good turn, if you give 10,000 gulden for her lost property. Otherwise she won't have as many hundreds when the salvage is paid."

Those words rung in Timar's ears. An invisible hand drove him on. "*Fata nolentem*

*trahunt!*” says St Augustine. Soon after, Timar sat again in the diligence, which galloped away with its four Neudorf horses. In the town every one slept. Only at the station-house sounded the night watchman’s call. No one has written on his brow what the next day will bring to him ; but from the walls the sentries, wet through with the autumn rain, challenged in turn “ Who goes there ? ” — “ Patrol ” — “ Pass.”

What sort of bread have these fellows had ?

## CHAPTER II.

## THE RED CRESCENT.

ON the following day, Timar did actually bid for the sunken grain in company with brokers and millers, who made trifling bids, a few groschen a measure. Timar got tired of this groschen business, and suddenly cried, "I will give ten thousand gulden for the whole cargo." When the bidders heard this they ran away, and it would have been in vain to run after them. The official auctioneer accepted Timar's offer, and gave over the whole cargo to him as his property. Every one thought him mad. What could he do with such a mass of soaked grain? What he did was this.

He lashed two lighters together, fastened them with iron clamps to the deck of the

sunken ship, and made arrangements to get up the cargo. There was a change since yesterday in the position of the vessel, for the stern had sunk so that now the forepart stood out of water, and one of the two cabins was quite dry. Timar installed himself here, and then began the hard work. He tore up the deck, and with the help of a crane drew up one sack after the other. They were first piled near the cabin, that the water might drain away; then they were transferred to a raft, and taken ashore: there straw mats were laid, on which the grain was shaken and spread out. Timar bargained meanwhile with the millers for immediate grinding of the corn. The weather was favourable, there was a strong wind, and the corn dried fast.

If only the work would go on quickly!

He began to calculate. The little ready money he had would all go to the payment of the work-people; if the undertaking failed he would be a beggar. Johann Fabula told him beforehand, that after this senseless purchase nothing would be left him but to hang the last

sack round his neck, and throw himself into the Danube. A thousand disquieting thoughts passed through Timar's head, without beginning or end. He looked on till night-fall, while one sack after the other was propped against the cabin wall. The sacks all had the same mark—a five-spoked wheel printed in black on the sacking. In truth, that poor fugitive pasha had been wiser, if, instead of buying so much grain, he had just put his money in his knapsack. And to think of pursuing him so obstinately only for this stuff! Was it worth while to flee only for this, and then actually to poison himself? Till late evening the work continued, and still only about three thousand measures were spread out to dry. Timar promised the labourers double pay if they would work a few hours longer. The grain which lies a second night under water will hardly make bread. The sack-carriers worked on cheerfully.

The wind had dispersed the clouds, and the moon appeared again in the sunset sky. Heavens and moon were red.

“How ghostly it looks!” said Timar, and



turned his back on the moon, so as not to see it.

But even as he stood there, and counted the sacks as they were drawn up, the red moon rose again before him. This time it was painted on a sack. In the place where the other sacks bore a wheel of five spokes, here above the trade-mark a crescent was painted in vermilion.

A cold shiver ran through Timar. Here was the answer to the riddle! This was what the dying man meant by his last words. But either his confidence was not strong enough, or else time had failed him to finish his phrase. When the labourers turned away Timar took the sack and carried it into the cabin; no one noticed it, and then he locked the door behind him.

The work-people went on for two hours more; but at last they were so tired, wet, and stiff with water and wind, that they were not in a condition to go on any longer: the rest of the cargo must wait till the morrow. The wearied folk hurried to the nearest alehouse to warm themselves with food and drink. Timar re-

mained alone on board : he said he wished to count the unloaded sacks, and would row himself ashore in the little boat. The moon had reached the water with its lower horn, and seemed to look in at the cabin window. Timar's hand trembled as if with ague. When he opened the blade of his knife, he cut his hand, and the drops of blood painted stars on the sack by the side of the red crescent. He cut the rope with which the sack was tied, and put his hand in ; what he brought out was beautiful white wheat. Then he cut the lower end of the sack : here too only grain came out. He now slit the whole sack up, and with the scattered corn, a long leathern bag fell at his feet. The bag had a lock. He broke it open.

And then he shook the contents out on to the bed,—the same bed where once the living marble statue had lain.

What a sight was presented to him in the moonlight ! Long rows of rings strung together—brilliant, sapphire, and emerald rings ; armlets of opals and huge turquoises ; pearl bracelets, each bead as large as a hazel-nut ; a

necklace of magnificent brilliants of the finest water; an agate box, from which when he opened it a whole heap of unset diamonds flashed upon him; at the bottom of the bag a number of agraffes and girdles, all set with rubies, and four rouleaux, each containing five hundred louis d'or. Here was an enormous treasure, at least a million gulden.

Now one can understand the man fleeing even to the bottom of the Danube, that this treasure might not fall into the hands of his pursuers. For this, it was worth while to send a gunboat and spies after the fugitive. For this, it was worth while to cut the tow-rope in the midst of a storm at the Iron Gate.

The St Barbara had carried a million on board! that is no child's play, no dream—it is reality. Ali Tschorbadschi's treasures lie there on the wet quilt with which Timéa had once covered herself. Whoever knows the value of pearls and precious stones, can understand that it was not for nothing that Ali Tschorbadschi had been Governor of Candia and guardian of the Treasury.

Timar sat in silent stupefaction on the edge of the bed, and held in his trembling hands the agate box, whose diamonds sparkled in the moonlight. He looked away through the window at the moon shining in. Again the moon seemed to have eyes and mouth, as it is depicted in the almanac, and to be entering into conversation with the poor mortal.

“To whom do these treasures belong?”

“Why, whom should they belong to but you? You bought the sunken cargo, just as it is, with the sacks and the grain. You were liable to the danger that it might remain on your hands as spoilt waste, as stinking rubbish. Now it has turned into gold and jewels. It is true that the dying man said something about the Red Crescent, and you puzzled your head as to what he could have meant; you wondered how it was possible that the refugee should have no more property than was visible. Now you see clearly how it all hung together; but then, ~~when~~ you bought the cargo, you did not know — ~~you~~ bought this mass of wet grain for quite ~~nausea: purpose.~~ You wanted to make sweet

and bitter bread out of it for the poor soldiers. Fate willed otherwise. Do you not see that this is a sign from heaven? It would not permit you to make a shameful profit at the expense of twenty thousand poor soldiers—it has provided for you otherwise. As Providence has prevented something wicked, that which happened by its direction must without doubt be good.”

“Besides, to whom should these treasures belong?”

“The Sultan must have stolen them in his victorious campaigns; the treasurer most probably stole them from the Sultan. Both were robbed of them by the Danube: now they have no owner—they belong to you. You possess them at any rate with just as much right as the Sultan, the treasurer, and the Danube.”

“And Timéa?”

At this question a long narrow black cloud rose before the moon's face.

Timar remained long in thought. The moon appeared again.

“So much the better for you. You know

best how the world treats a poor devil like you. They scold him when he has done his duty ; they call him a knave when a misfortune overtakes him ; they allow him to hang himself on the nearest tree when he has nothing more to live on ; for his love-sorrows pretty girls have no balm. A poor man remains always only a clerk. Then see how the world honours the rich man—how people seek for his friendship, ask his advice, and trust him with the fate of the nation ; and women, how they fall in love with him ! Did you ever get even a friendly word of thanks from their lips ? What would you get if you took the treasure you have found and laid it at her feet with the words, ‘There, take what is yours—I saved it for you from the depths’ ? In the first place, she would not know how to use it. She can hardly distinguish the value of a box of diamonds from that of a box of sweets ; she is only a child ; and then it would never reach her hands, for her adopted papa would absorb it and get rid of nine-tenths of it. Who can prevent him from taking one gem at a time and turning



it into money? But granted that Timéa gets it, what would be the result? She would be a rich lady, who would not cast a look at you from her height; and you would remain a miserable supercargo, in whom it would be madness even to dream of her. Now, however, things are the other way—you will be a rich man and she a poor girl. Is not that exactly what you desired of fate? Well, that is what has happened. Did you put that log in the way of the ship which stove her in? Do you mean badly by Timéa? No; you do not want to keep for yourself the treasures you have found; you will invest them profitably, increase them, and when you have earned with the first million a second and a third, then you will go to the poor girl and say, 'There, take it—it is all yours; and take me too.' Do you wish to do anything wrong with it? You only wish to become rich in order to make her happy. You can sleep with a good conscience, having such designs."

The moon was already half hidden in the Danube; only the tip of one horn rose from the water like a lighthouse; its reflection in

the waves reached to the ship's bow, and every ray and every wave spoke to Timar. And they all said, "You have fortune in your hand; hold it fast—you risk nothing. The only one who knew of the treasure lies below the Danube."

Timar heard what was whispered to him, and also the secret voice in his own breast, and cold drops stood on his brow. The moon's fiery tip vanished beneath the surface of the water, and cried to him with its last ray, "You are rich—you are a made man!"

But when it was dark, the inward voice whispered in the silent night, "You are a thief!"

An hour afterwards a four-horse post-chaise was rushing along the Szönyer road at a gallop, and as the tower clock of St Andrew's Church in Komorn struck eleven, the carriage stood at the door in the Anglia under the double eagle. Timar sprang quickly out and hurried in. He was expected.



## CHAPTER III.

## THE GOLD MINE.

AFTER the concentration of troops in Komorn, Timar had suddenly become a wealthy man. He had bought a house in the Servian street, the "City" of the Komorn merchants. No one was surprised. The phrase once uttered by the Emperor Francis I. to a contractor who had remained poor, was, "The ox stood at the manger, why did he not eat?" These golden words have, I fancy, been written by every contractor in his memorandum-book.

How much Timar made by his bread-contract it is impossible to say; but that he has suddenly become a great personage, it is easy to see. He is always on the spot when there is a large undertaking on hand, and has money

in abundance. This is not surprising to merchants or speculators; the first stage is the difficult one. If once the first hundred thousand gulden are made, the rest follows of itself—he has credit.

On one point Herr Brazovics had no doubt whatever. He guessed rightly that Timar had offered the officials a larger commission than he himself usually did, and that he had thus obtained the profitable bread-contract by which Brazovics usually enriched himself. But that he should have made so large a profit out of it—on that point he shook his head incredulously. Since Timar had risen in the world, and become his own master, Brazovics cultivated the friendship of his former supercargo, and invited him to his evening receptions, which Timar accepted willingly enough. He met Timéa there very often, who had already learnt a little colloquial Hungarian.

Timar was now welcome even to Sophie, who once half whispered and half screamed to Athalie that it would do no harm if she was rather more friendly to him, for he was now

a rich man, a far from despicable *parti*, worth more than three officers put together, who have nothing but their smart uniform and their debts. To which Fräulein Athalie replied, "It does not follow that I should take my father's servant for a husband." Frau Sophie could finish the sentence for herself—"Because my papa married his maid-servant,"—in which lay a well-earned reproach to Frau Sophie. How could she have dared to intrude herself in the capacity of mother upon such a grand young lady.

Towards the end of supper one evening, as the two sat alone at table, Herr Brazovics began to incite Timar to drink, by repeatedly taking wine with him. His own head was pretty strong from constant practice, but this poor devil could never have been used to the bottle.

When they were well on the road, he cunningly brought up the subject. "You, Michael, out with the truth now—how did you contrive to profit so much by the Commissariat contract? I have tried it myself, and I know what can be got out of it. I also have mixed felspar, bran,

and miller's dust with the dough ; I understand how to get acorns ground instead of corn, and know the difference between rye and wheat flour ; but to make such a *coup* as you have done has never happened to me. Confess now ! What trick were you up to ? You are already wealthy,—you have found a gold mine."

Timar put on the look of a tipsy man who required six horse-power to raise his eyelids, and began with drunken fluency and a stammering tongue to explain. " Well, you must know, sir——"

" No sir to me ! How often have I told you ! Call me by my name."

" Well, then, you must know, Nazi, it was no trick. You remember that I bought in the soaked grain-cargo of the St Barbara at a nominal price, a gulden a measure. I did not get rid of it, as people fancied, to the millers and farmers, with a profit of a couple of groschen ; but I had it baked into bread at once, which did not cost me half so much as if I had bought the very cheapest flour."

" Oh, you prodigy ! I ought to go to school to

you in my old age. You arch-rascal! Was the ration-bread very bad, then?"

Michael laughed so that the wine almost ran out of his mouth again. "I should just think it was bad,—bad beyond words."

"And were no complaints laid before the Commissariat committee?"

"What use would that have been, when I had the whole lot of them in my pocket?"

"But the commandant of the fortress, the Inspector of Ordnance?"

"I squared them too," cried Michael, proudly, striking his pocket, in which so many great men had found room. The eyes of Herr Brazovics shone in a curious way, as if they were even redder than usual. "And did you give the bread made of soaked wheat to the soldiers to eat?"

"Why not? Bread once swallowed tells no tales."

"Quite true, Michael, quite true; but you be careful not to tell any one yourself. You can tell me, of course—I am your true friend; but if one of your enemies got wind of it, it might

go badly with you. Your house in the Servian street might go too. Hold your tongue before other people."

On this Timar began, like one who has suddenly come to his senses, to entreat Herr Brazovics not to betray his secret and make him miserable; he even kissed his hands! Brazovics pacified him, he need not be uneasy about him, he must not let out his secret to others. Then he called the servant and ordered him to take a lantern and go home with Herr Timar, and take good care of him that he should come to no harm, and if he were unable to walk, to take his arm. When the servant returned, he related what trouble it had cost him to get Timar home; he had not known his own door, and had begun to sing in the street. They had at last got him to bed, and there the good gentleman had instantly gone to sleep. But when Brazovics's servant had gone, Timar left his bed, and wrote letters until morning.

He had not been in the least tipsy. Timar was as certain that his dear friend would at once give information of the whole affair as

that Monday comes after Sunday; and he also knew to whom.

It was therefore no surprise to him that, a few days later, after an evening spent with Brazovics, he was cited to appear at the fortress, where a gentleman entitled "Financial Privy Counsellor" gave him to understand that he was to remain for the present under strict observation, and demanded his keys, in order to lay an embargo on his books and papers.

This will be a big thing. Timar's secret had been denounced to the general Chamber of Finance, which was in rivalry with the leaders of the Council of War. Here was an opportunity to reveal in the most conspicuous way the scandals which took place in the bosom of this community, and to remove from it the control of the Commissariat. The accusation was supported by the three High Courts—only the Police Department was on the side of the Council of War. At last the Chamber gave its decision, and a commission was appointed, with strict injunctions to spare no one, to suspend the whole Department of Supply, to request the

commandant to arrest the contractor, commence a criminal suit, and discover everything. If one morsel of musty bread should appear against Timar, woe to him !

But nothing of the sort was found. For eight days the commission worked day and night. They heard witnesses, took oaths, inquired, had the provost up—all in vain, no one could say anything against Timar. From the whole inquiry it was proved that he had divided the spoilt cargo amongst millers, country people, and manufacturers ; that not one single handful had been mixed with the bread baked for the troops. They had even the soldiers up to give evidence. They said they had never eaten better bread than during the two weeks when it was provided by Timar. No complaint, no adverse witness appeared against him, much less could the officials be accused of corruption ; they had given the contract to him who offered the best and lowest terms. At last they boiled over ; they felt insulted by the inquiry, stormed and rattled their swords ; the commission, driven into a corner, got alarmed, revoked, rehabilitated,



and tried to get away from Komorn as quickly as possible. Timar was set free with many excuses, and with the assurance that he was a thoroughly honest man.

At his acquittal Herr Katschuka was the first who hastened to congratulate him, and shook his hand demonstratively in public. "My friend, you must not put up with this quietly; you must have satisfaction for it. Just fancy, they suspected *me* of being bribed! Go to Vienna and demand reparation; the informer must have an exemplary punishment. And in future," he added aside, "you may be sure no one will ever get us out of the saddle. Strike while the iron is hot."

Timar promised to do so, and mentioned his intention to Brazovics when he next met him. The latter seemed furious at the ill-treatment his friend Michael had received. Who could the scoundrel be who had so libelled him?

"Whoever it may be," Timar declared, "shall rue it dearly; and if he has a house in Komorn, I'll lay my head that this joke will cost him his home. I am going to-morrow morning

to Vienna, to demand satisfaction from the Treasury."

"Yes, do so, by all means," said Brazovics; and thought to himself, "Just as well that I know it; I shall be there too."

And he happened to get there a day sooner than Timar. There, with the assistance of his old connections, he so prepared the way (which cost him a mint of money) that if once Timar set his foot in this labyrinth, he would never get out again. From the Treasury he will be sent to the High Court; there the affair will be given over to the Judicial Office, thence to the Superintendent of Police, and from there to the Secret Department of Finance.

The unfortunate plaintiff at last loses patience, gets angry, and says a few imprudent words, —even possibly gets them printed. Then the Censor gets hold of him, and at last he begs to be let go, and swears never again to pull the bell at any public office. He will be a fool for his pains if he tries to get justice. But Timar was not a fool; he was far cleverer than either of his advisers—than both put together. He

had grown cunning from the time when he let himself be persuaded to take the first wrong step: he knew already that you should never tell any one the real thing you are going to do. At Pancsova, when he snapped his fingers at the authorities, he had shown what talents lay undiscovered in him. Then he had done in another's interest what could be of no use to himself: he did what he was told to do, and humbugged the pursuers; now he was doing it in his own interest. Being in possession of the treasure-trove, he must find some excuse for appearing as a rich man before the public. He must pretend to be a speculator who had been lucky in his business. In his very first affair he must be reputed to have made large sums. If people imagined he had made his money by corrupt means, that was the lesser evil; and it could not be proved, for it was not true. He had been put to such great expense by the contract, that hardly any profit was left; but he was in a position to buy houses and ships, and pay in gold, and every one thought the money at his disposal came from his successful tender.

He required a pretext, a title, a visible ground, in order to go quietly forward with the help of Tschorbadski's wealth.

What, then, did he do in Vienna?

He must ask for compensation from the Exchequer, and could reckon on the support of the War Department. From his friends at Komorn he had received letters of recommendation to the most influential officials. He left all these letters at the bottom of his trunk, and went direct to the Chancellor himself, of whom he requested an audience. The Minister was pleased that this man did not try to get in by backstairs influence, but came direct by the front entrance. He admitted him. The Minister was a tall man with a clean-shaven face, an imposing double-chin, severe brows, and very bald. On his breast shone numerous orders. He had stuck both hands under his coat-tails when this poor individual with the big moustache was shown in. Timar wore a simple black Hungarian costume.

The first question of his Excellency to Timar

was, "Why do you not wear a sword when you come to an audience?"

"I am not a noble, gracious sir."

"Indeed! I suppose you have come to me to ask for compensation for your arrest and the injury which was inflicted on you?"

"Far from it," answered Timar. "The Government only did its duty in proceeding against greater men than I, as well as myself, on the ground of apparently well-founded information. As I am not of nobility, it is of no consequence to me to lay damages on account of my injured honour. Indeed I owe gratitude to the informer as well as to the court, for having by their strict inquiry made it perfectly clear that my hands were clean all through my contract."

"Oh, then, you have no intention of demanding satisfaction from the informer?"

"On the contrary, I should think it unadvisable to do so, for many an honest man might be prevented from revealing real abuses. My honour is established: it is not my nature to revenge myself. Besides, I have neither time nor desire for it. Forgive and forget."

Whilst Timar spoke, his Excellency had already taken one hand from under his coat-tails in order to clap Timar on the shoulder.

“That is a very practical way of looking at it. You can do better than losing time by running about after vengeance. A very sensible idea. What brings you, then, to me?”

“A tender for which I need your Excellency’s protection.”

The Excellency stuck his hand behind him again.

“The Crown has a property on the frontier, in Levetincz.”

“H’m!” grumbled the great man, and frowned.  
“What do you want with it?”

“In my business as a wholesale dealer, I have often been there, and know the local circumstances. The Crown lands extend to thirty thousand acres, and are let to Silbermann, the Vienna banker, at forty kreuzers an acre. The conclusion of this contract lies within the province of the Treasury; but the disposal of the income belongs to the Military Department. This income amounts to a hundred thousand



gulden. Silbermann divided the estate into three parts, and let to subtenants at a gulden an acre."

"Of course he wanted to make something out of it."

"Naturally. The subtenants let the land in smaller parcels to the peasantry for a certain percentage of the crops. But now, after two bad harvests, the land in the Banat has not even grown enough for seed-corn. The peasants got nothing, and could not give any percentage to the subtenants, who paid nothing to the Crown lessee; and he, in order to get rid of his contract, went bankrupt, and paid no rent to the Government."

Now both hands of the great official came out and began to gesticulate. "Yes; because he lived in princely luxury, the rascal! Just imagine, he kept horses which cost eight thousand gulden, and drove them about. Now they are up for sale. I am an 'Excellency,' but I am not in a position to keep such costly horses as those."

Timar took no notice, and continued his re-

marks: "The Treasury now is defrauded of its rent, for there is nothing to seize. The tenant and the subtenants are married; their whole property belongs to their wives under the name of dowry. The hundred thousand gulden are lost to the Military Department, which, I have been told, will claim the sum from the Exchequer."

The Chancellor opened his snuff-box, and whilst he put his two fingers in for a pinch, he threw an inquiring look on the speaker with one eye.

"My humble offer therefore is," continued Timar, laying a folded paper on the table, "to rent the Levetincz estate for ten years at the price paid by the sub-lessees—namely, a gulden an acre."

"Very good."

"The new tenant will already have lost a year, for it is November, and all the fields are lying fallow. But in spite of that, I offer not only to include the past year in the term, but also to be responsible for the irrecoverable rent."



His Excellency tapped twice on the lid of his gold snuff-box, and pursed his lips together. Well, thought he, this is a man of gold. He is not such a fool as he looks. He guesses that the Treasury would like to take the Commissariat out of the hands of the War Office, and that all this was mixed up with the inquiry at Komorn. Then, after that horrible *fiasco*, the clattering swords are at the top of the tree, and would be very glad to get the manipulation of the lands on the military frontier into their own hands. They think it would be a good milch-cow, and the deficit caused by the bankruptcy of the Levetinez tenant gives them a pretext. And now this fellow does not combine with the enemies of the Treasury which prosecuted him, but comes over to us, and will improve our position and help us out of our difficulty. A man of gold indeed, and to be properly appreciated! "Good," said his Excellency; "I see you are an honest man. You had some cause to complain of us, but abstained; you will see that this is the right way for a good citizen to act. Just to show you that the State knows how to

reward patriotic subjects, I guarantee you the acceptance of your offer. Come to my office to-night. I pledge you my word as to the result."

Timar presented his offer in writing, and took leave with low bows. His Excellency was pleased with this man. In the first place, he is wise enough to look over the injustice done to him, which if he had followed it up would have brought unpleasant scandal on the department. Secondly, he offers the Government an advantageous rent, fifty per cent higher than the last. Thirdly, he comes to the aid of the Exchequer with a generous offer, and enables them victoriously to repel the attack of the War Department. He is a threefold man of gold—no, fourfold—but of that his Excellency knows nothing as yet. He was to learn it for the first time when he went home to dinner at his palace, and his stud-groom informed him that the gentleman from Hungary who had been commissioned by his Excellency to bid for the eight thousand gulden horses had brought them home, and would personally report particulars of their price to his Excellency.

A fourfold treasure !

When Timar visited the great man in his office that evening, he saw on every face a polite smile—the reflection of gold. His Excellency met him at the door, and led him to the table. There lay the contract outspread ; complete with all signatures, with the greater and lesser seals affixed. “ Read — I hope you will be satisfied.”

The first thing which surprised Timar was that the lease ran for twenty years instead of ten.

“ Well, are you satisfied with the term ? ”

Was he satisfied ! The second surprising thing was his own name, “ Michael Timar, Baron von Levetinczy.”

“ Do you like your title ? ”

## CHAPTER IV.

MICHAEL TIMAR, BARON VON LEVETINCZY.

"THE diploma of nobility shall be sent to you," said the great man with a gracious smile.

Timar signed his name, with the addition of his new title, to the contract.

"Do not be in a hurry," said his Excellency, "I have something more to say. It is a duty of the Government to distinguish those who have deserved it by their services to the nation. Especially in regard to such as have won universal recognition in the regions of commerce and political economy. Could you name any one whom I could recommend in the highest quarters for the decoration of the Iron Crown?"

His Excellency was quite prepared to receive for answer—"Here is my own button-hole, sir; you can find no better place for your Order of Merit. If you only want an honest man, here am I." And the offer was made with this idea.

So much the greater was the astonishment of the Minister when Michael Timar-Levetinczy after a brief pause replied—"Yes, sir, I will make so free as to point out a person who has long enjoyed universal respect, who has secretly been the benefactor of the district where he lives: it is no other than the Dean of Pless-covacz, Cyril Sandorovics, who deserves this distinction in an eminent degree."

The Minister started back. An individual had never before come under his notice who, on being asked—"To whom shall I give this order," had not turned to the mirror, and pointing to himself, replied—"Give it to this worthy man!" but who instead of that had indicated with his finger the farthest limit of the national map, and there seeking out a country priest, not his brother-in-law or godfather, not

even a priest of his own Church, had said—  
“This is a better man than I.” Indeed this is a man of pure gold. A gold worker would have to mix at least three carats of silver with him before he would be malleable. But as the question has been asked, it must be seriously considered. “Good, good,” replied the great man, “but the bestowal of an order involves certain formalities. The sovereign cannot contemplate the eventuality of a refusal: the person to whom such a distinction falls must go through the form of personally applying for it.”

“His reverence is a very modest man, and would only, if I know him, decide on such a step on receiving an invitation from high quarters.”

“Indeed? I understand. A line from my hand would suffice? Good. As it is recommended by you, it shall be done. Yes; the State must reward modest merit.”

And the great man wrote with his own hand a few lines to the Rev. Dean Cyril Sandorovics, with the assurance that, if he desired it, he

should receive the decoration of the Iron Crown in return for his services. Timar thanked his Excellency warmly for this favour, and was assured of his high protection for all future time. And, further, Timar had the pleasure of finding that in the whole office, where one generally has to go through every kind of tiresome formality, here every one was at his service, so that he only required an hour to get through his business, whilst it would have taken any one else weeks before he could get out of this official labyrinth. The water-jug of the Orsova purifier was there in an invisible shape!

It was night before he had packed all the documents relative to his completed contract in his portmanteau. And now for speed! He neither supped nor slept, but hastened to the "Golden Lamb," where the mail-cart put up. In the bar he bought a roll and a smoked sausage, which he put in his pocket; he could get them out on the journey. Then he called to the driver, "We must be off at once—spare neither whip nor horses. I will give you a

gulden an hour for yourself, and pay double price for my place." It was needless to say more.

Two minutes later the mail-cart was dashing through the streets of Vienna with great crackling of whips, the police in vain calling out that it was forbidden in Vienna. The courier-posts, which at that time took the place of railways, formed one connected chain between Vienna and Semlin. The horses stood harnessed day and night, and as soon as the crack of the whip at one end of the village announced the approach of the post, the postmaster brought out the new team from the stable, and in two minutes the cart with the fresh horses rolled away over hill and dale at a gallop. If two post-carts met on the road they changed horses and drivers, who then had only half the distance to go back. The speed of the journey was regulated by the amount of the pay.

Timar sat in the cart two days and nights without getting down for a meal, let alone a night's rest. He was quite used to sleeping in the carriage, in spite of shaking and rolling



and knocking about. On the evening of the second day he was in Semlin, whence he drove all night to the first village on the Levetinczy estate.

It was fine mild weather for the first of December. He drove to the little town-hall, and sent for the village judge; he told him he was the new tenant of the estate, and requested him to make known to the farmers that they could rent the land in shares as in former years. During the two last years the fields which bore no fruit had lain as good as fallow, so that there would be a prospect of a rich harvest for the next season. The weather was favourable, the autumn lasting long; by setting to work at once there was still time to plough and sow.

That was all very well, they replied; ploughing could be managed if the principal thing, seed-corn, were not wanting. It was not to be got for love or money. The landowners had only with the greatest difficulty secured any for themselves; poor people would have to live on maize all the winter.

Timar gave the consoling assurance that he would take care that they did not want for seed-corn, and so he went through the other villages whose inhabitants farmed as subtenants, and who, on his persuasion, got out their ploughs and went to turn over the fields which had been allowed to lie fallow a whole year. But where was the seed to come from? It was too late to get grain from Wallachia, and there was none in the neighbourhood. But Timar knew where to get it. On the 2d December he reached Plesscovacz, whence a short time before he had almost been driven by force, and sought out his reverence, Cyril Sandorovics, who had then turned him out of his house.

“Aha! my son, are you here again?” This was his reception by the venerable gentleman, that friend and benefactor of the people who ought long ago to have received the order of the Iron Crown if he had not been so retiring. “What do you want now? To buy grain? I told you two months ago I had none, and could not sell any. It is no use talking! You will lie in vain, for I don’t believe a word you

say. You have a Greek name and a long moustache. I don't trust your face."

Timar smiled. "Well, this time nothing but truth shall pass my lips."

"Tell that to the other people. You dealers from the upper country are always deceiving us. You pretend there was a poor harvest in your parts and drive our prices down. When you wanted to buy hay from us, you spread the report that the Government was going to sell all its horses. You are a rascally lot."

"But now I tell you the truth. I am here with a commission from the Government to beg your reverence in their name to open your granaries. The Government having heard that the people are in need of seed-corn, wishes to divide amongst them some supplies of grain. This is a sacred purpose, a great benefit to be conferred on the people, and whoever assists them in this renders them a great service. I am not to receive the grain, but it is to be delivered to the farmers, who will use it for seed-corn."

"My son, that is all very true, and I am

very sorry for the poor people, but I have no grain. Where should I get it? I had no harvest. There is my great stupid barn, but all three floors are empty."

"It is not empty, reverend sir. I know very well that three years' harvest is stored away there: I could get at least ten thousand measures out of it."

"You would get trash. Spare yourself the trouble. I would not sell for five gulden a measure; in the spring it will be seven gulden, and then I will sell. You lie in your throat when you say the Government sends you; you only want to make your own profit, and not a grain will you get from me. Much the Government knows about you and me; we might as well be in the moon for all it cares."

Till now the fortress had held out bravely against small arms. But Timar put his hand in his pocket and brought out a four-and-twenty pounder, the Minister's letter. When the reverend gentleman had read it he could hardly believe his own eyes.

The great seal on the envelope with the

Imperial double eagle, the stamp of the Exchequer on the paper, left no room for doubt. It was no deception but the absolute truth.

To wear that brilliant cross upon his breast had long been the *ne plus ultra* of his dreams. Timar knew of this weakness of the Dean's, who often, as they sat over their wine, had bitterly complained of the injustice of the Government in heaping decorations on the Patriarch at Carlovitz. Why give all to one and send the other empty away? Now he had attained his greatest desire—how the peasants will gape at him when he has attached this order to his breast, and how the Tschaikiss captain will envy him, having none of his own! Even the Patriarch will be a degree more condescending in future. Meanwhile his own manner to Timar had suddenly undergone a great change.

“Sit down, little brother!” (until now he had not even offered a seat)—“tell me, how did you get to know their Excellencies? Why did they intrust the letter to you?”

Timar told him some story or other, and lied like print. He had given up his post under

Brazovics and taken service under Government. He had great influence with the Minister, and it was he who had recommended his reverence for this distinction, as a good old friend of his own.

“I knew you were not such a fool as you look; that’s why I have always liked you so much. Now, my son, because you have such a beautiful Greek name, and such an honest face, you shall have the grain. How much do you want? Ten, twelve thousand measures? I will sell you all I have. Not to please the Minister, no, indeed! but for the sake of your own honest face, and to do good to the poor people. What price did I say? Five gulden? I will tell you what, I will give it to *you* for four gulden nineteen kreuzers. You pay cash down? Or shall I get the money in Vienna? I shall be going there, and can do it at the same time. I must thank his Excellency in person for this honour. You will come and introduce me? Or if you want to have nothing to do with it, tell me at any rate what sort of man he is. Is he big or little, friendly or haughty? Will he give me the cross himself? Does he



like good Carlovitz and Vermuth? Now then, you shall taste some yourself."

In vain Timar assured him he must go back that night to Levetinczy, to give orders to the steward to send the tenants for the seed-corn. The friendly host would not part with his guest, but placed the servant at his disposal, who could ride to Levetinczy and deliver the instructions. Michael must remain overnight with him. The reverend gentleman had glasses with rounded bottoms, which when they were filled could not be laid down till they were empty. He gave one to Timar, took another himself, and so they caroused till morning. And Timar showed no signs of drink; he had lived in that district, and had got used to it. Early in the morning the farmers came with their waggons to the Dean's courtyard. When they saw that the doors of the three-storeyed granary were really open, they said to Timar he was the right sort of saint and could work miracles. In the barn were supplies for three years, more than was required for all their winter seed.

Timar never left the estate he had rented until the winter frosts set in, which stopped field-work for the season. But it was enough for the present. The remaining acres would do for spring-sowing, or as fallow, or for pasture. On the whole estate of thirty thousand acres there were only a few hundred acres of meadow-land, all the rest was arable and of the first class. If the next year should be favourable, the harvest would be superabundant.

It was sown at exactly the right time. October remained dry and windy to the end. Those who had sown before that might be sure of a bad crop, for the legions of marmots had scratched out the seed before it sprang up. Those who sowed during the wet November were no better off, for it had snowed early, and in the warm ground under the snow-covering the seed rotted; but when the snow had melted, a long mild spell set in which lasted till Christmas. Whoever had sown then could congratulate himself; the marmots were gone; frost now came before snow, and under the beautiful white covering the treasure entrusted



to the soil lay safely hidden till spring. Farming is a game of chance. Six or nothing! Timar threw six.

Then followed such a fruitful year, that whoever had profited by the favourable season in the Banat received twenty-fold in crops.

In this year Timar brought thirty cargoes of the finest wheat to Komorn and Raab, and these thirty had cost him no more than three to another person. It depended on himself whether to make half a million of profit or a hundred thousand more or less—either to make poor people's bread cheaper, or to hold a knife to the throat of his competitors.

It lay with him to drive prices down as low as he chose. In Brazovics's *café* there was angry talk every evening amongst the assembled corn-dealers. He scatters money like chaff, and squanders his goods as if they were stolen. If only he would come amongst them they would get him by the throat!

But he does not come; he goes nowhere and seeks no acquaintances. He takes care to tell no one what he is going to do, and all he

undertakes turns into gold. Many new industries are called into being by him, which might have occurred to any one else: they lay, so to speak, in the street, and only wanted picking up; but they were only noticed by others when this man had already got hold of them. He is always in movement, travelling here and there, and people wonder why he goes on living in this town; why he does not move to Vienna; why he, who is so rich, has his headquarters in Komorn, though it was certainly then an important commercial centre.

Timar knows what keeps him there. He knows why he lives in a town where all his mercantile colleagues are his sworn enemies, where the people sitting before Brazovics's *café* send a curse after him every time he passes. That house too he means to get into his clutches, with all that therein is. This it was which kept him in Komorn, when already he was the owner of a million and a half; he remained where they still called him Timar, and had not got used to his noble title of Levetinczy.

Yet he knew how to suit noble deeds to his noble name. He founded a hospital for the poor of the town, he endowed the Protestant schools; even the chalice turned to gold in his hands. Instead of the silver one he presented a golden one to the church. His door was always open to the poor, and every Friday a long line of beggars went through the streets to his house, where each received a piece of money, the largest copper coin in existence, the so-called "schuster-thaler." People said that when a sailor was drowned, Timar maintained his orphans and gave a pension to his widow. A heart of gold indeed! A man of gold!

But in his heart a voice continually whispered, "It is not true! It is all false!"

## CHAPTER V.

## A GIRL'S HEART.

HERR BRAZOVICS usually drank coffee after dinner, and had it served in the ladies' sitting-room, which he filled unmercifully with clouds of Latakia tobacco.

Katschuka sat whispering with Athalie at a little table, at the corner of which Frau Sophie pretended to be busy sewing. (For years past this table had been ostentatiously spread with needlework and knitting, so that visitors might imagine they were occupied with the trousseau.)

Herr Katschuka almost lived in the house; he came in the forenoon, was pressed to stay to dinner, and only found his way home late in the evening.

It would appear that the fortifications of

Komorn were complete, as the Engineer officer had the whole day to spend with Fräulein Athalie. But the fortifications of Herr Katschuka's own fortress could not hold out any longer—the time was come for his marriage. He resisted like a second Zriny. When driven from the outworks, he retreated to the citadel. He always had some plausible pretext for delaying the marriage. Now, however, the last mine had been exploded. His deposit was endorsed by the Brazovics firm, and the Council of War had accepted their receipt instead of money down; a house had been found for the young couple, and besides all this Katschuka had received his promotion to the rank of captain. This removed his last excuse; the last cartridge of the besieged had been expended, and nothing remained but to capitulate, and take the rich and beautiful girl home.

Herr Brazovics became more and more venomous every day when he drank his coffee with the ladies; and the man by whom his coffee was poisoned was always Timar.

This was his daily *delenda est Carthago*.

“What confounded tricks that fellow is up to! Whilst other honest dealers are glad to rest in winter from their labours, he is busy with things that no cat would think of. He has hired the Platten-See now, and fishes under the ice: a little while ago his people caught three hundredweight of fish in one haul. It is a theft! Before the spring comes he will have cleared the Platten-See, so that not a single perch, not a shad nor a roach, not a garfish, let alone a fogasch,<sup>1</sup> will be left in it. And he sends them all to Vienna. As if that was what fogasch swam in the Balaton lake for—that those Germans might eat them! The damned scoundrel! The Government ought to set a price on his head. Sooner or later I will get rid of him, that’s certain. When he goes over the bridge I will get a couple of fishermen to throw him into the Danube; I will pay a sentry a couple of gulden to shoot him by accident when he passes in the dark; I’ll turn a mad dog into his yard, that it may bite him when he comes out in the morning. They ought to hang

<sup>1</sup> *Leucia perca*.

the rascal ! I'll set his house on fire, that he may burn with it ! And they ennoble such a fellow ! In the town council they make him assessor, and the good-for-nothing sits at the green table with me. I, whose grandfather was of ancient Hungarian nobility, must suffer him near me, this runaway rogue !

“ But just let him attempt to come near this *café*. I'll set a band upon him who will throw him out of the window and break his neck ! If ever I sat down to table with him I would season his soup so that he would soon be on his back like a dead fish ! And this vagabond pays visits to ladies ! This Timar, this former super-cargo, who used to be a mud-lark ! If he happened to be in the company of a brave officer who would call him out, and spit him like a frog—so ! ”

Herr Brazovics threw a meaning glance on Herr Katschuka, who seemed as if he had heard nothing. He had heard well enough ; but what had principally struck him in the monologue of his future father-in-law was that the new millionaire must have made a great breach in

the riches of Herr Brazovics, and that this rage was caused by the threatened ruin of the firm. A thought not calculated to increase the officer's joy at the approaching wedding-day.

"No ; I will not wait for some one else to get rid of him !" said Brazovics at last, and stood up, laid aside his chibouque, and fetched his bamboo cane from its corner. "I have a dagger. I bought it since the fellow settled here, on purpose for him" (and that he might be believed he drew the sharp blade out of his sword-stick). "There it is ! The first time we meet alone, I will stick it into him and nail him to the wall like a bat. And that I swear !"

And he tried by rolling his bloodshot eyes to give emphasis to his threat. He drank the rest of his coffee standing, drew on his overcoat, and said he was going to business.

He would come home early (that is, early in the morning). Every one was glad when he went.

Just as Herr Brazovics went carefully down the steps to the street—for his corpulence prevented his running down-stairs—who should come to meet him but—Timar !



Now is his chance ; at striking distance, and in a dark place where no one can see them. We know by history that most murders are committed on the stairs. Timar had no weapon with him, not even a walking-stick ; but Herr Athanas had a stiletto, two feet long.

When he saw Timar, he put his sword-stick under his arm, and cried aloud as he took off his hat, "Your obedient servant ! good day to you, Herr von Levetinczy !"

Timar answered with a "Servant, Nazi,—off to business again ?"

"He ! he ! he !" laughed Herr Brazovics jovially, like a boy who is caught in a bit of mischief. "Now then, Michael, won't you keep us company ?"

"Shouldn't think of it. If you want to win a couple of hundred gulden from me, I had better pay them now ; but to sit the whole night gambling and drinking, no, thank you."

"He ! he ! he ! Well, go up to the ladies then ; they are up-stairs. A pleasant evening to you. I shan't see you again to-day."

And they parted with a hearty shake of the hand, for Herr Athanas does not mean anything by his threats. No one is afraid of him, in spite of his frightful voice and imposing appearance, not even his wife—especially his wife. He knows well enough that Timar goes regularly to his house, and arranges to be away when he comes. Frau Sophie has not concealed her opinion that the visits are doubtless owing to the fine eyes of Athalie. Well, that is Katschuka's affair: if he does not spit his rival like a frog it is his own fault; he has been warned. But he does not seem inclined to do it, though Timar and Athalie are often together.

And why the devil should the Captain challenge Timar? They are as good friends as ever they were.

Herr Brazovics guessed—indeed he had means of knowing—that it was no other than Captain Katschuka who had opened the door through which Timar had attained his riches. Why he had done so was easy to imagine. He wanted to get rid of Athalie, and it would

suit him very well if Brazovics intervened and forbade him the house.

But that was just what he did not do, but overflowed with tenderness for the Captain—his son-in-law. There was no way out of it: he must marry Athalie. The Captain has long been betrothed to Athalie, to whom a dangerous rival pays daily court—a rich man whom he ought to hate, because he left him in the lurch in the quarrel between the Treasury and the War Office, and yet the Captain is so fond of his old friend that he is capable of forgiving him if he ran away with his bride.

Athalie despises Timar, once her father's clerk, but treats him nevertheless in a friendly way. She is passionately in love with the Captain, but pays attention to Timar in his presence to make him jealous.

Sophie hates Timar, but receives him with honeyed words, as if it were her dearest wish to have him for her son-in-law, and live under the same roof with him.

Timar, on the other hand, means to ruin the

whole of them—the master, the mistress, the young lady, and the bridegroom; all of them he would like to turn into the street, and yet he visits at the house, kisses the ladies' hands, and endeavours to make himself agreeable.

They are all civil to him. Athalie plays the piano to him. Frau Sophie keeps him to supper, and offers him coffee and preserved fruits. Timar drinks the coffee with the thought that perhaps there is rat-poison in it.

When the supper-table is brought, Timéa appears and helps to lay it. Then Timar hears no more of Athalie's words or music; he has eyes only for Timéa. It was a pleasure to see the pretty creature. She was fifteen and already almost a woman, but her expression and naïve awkwardness were those of a child. She could speak Hungarian, though with a curious accent, and sometimes with a wrong word or phrase—ridiculous of course, but not wholly unknown even in Parliament, and during the most serious debates.

Athalie had made an acquisition in Timéa:

she had now some one to make fun of. The poor child served her as a toy. She gave her old clothes to wear which had been fashionable years ago. At one time people wore a high comb turned backwards, over which the hair was drawn, and on the top rose a gigantic bow of coloured ribbon. They wore crinoline round their shoulders instead of their waists, having huge sleeves stuffed and padded. This dress looked well when in fashion; but a few years after the vogue had passed, its revival suggested a masquerade.

Athalie found it amusing to dress up Timéa thus. In taste the poor child, never having seen European fashions, stood on a par with a wild Indian: the more remarkable the dress the better she liked it. She was charmed when Athalie dressed her in the queer old silk gowns, and stuck the high comb and bright ribbon in her hair. She thought she looked lovely, and took the smiles of the people whom she met in the street for admiration, hastening on so as not to be stared at. In the town she was always called "the mad Turkish girl."

And it was easy to make fun of her without her taking it ill. Athalie took special delight in making the poor child an object of ridicule before gentlemen. If young men were present, she encouraged them to pay court to Timéa, and it amused her highly when she saw that Timéa accepted these attentions seriously; how pleased she was to be treated like a grown-up lady, to be asked to dance at balls, or when some pretended admirer offered her a faded bouquet, and extracted some quaint expression of thanks in reply, which caused the company to burst into fits of laughter. How Athalie's laugh resounded on these occasions!

Frau Sophie took a more serious view of Timéa. She scolded her continually; all she did was wrong. Adopted children are often awkward, and the more Timéa was scolded the more awkward she became. Then Fräulein Athalie defended her. "But, mamma, don't be always scolding the girl! You treat her like a servant. Timéa is not a servant, and I won't have you always going on at her."

Timéa kissed Sophie's hand that she might



cease to be angry, and Athalie's out of gratitude for taking her part, and then the hands of both that they might not quarrel. She was a humble, thankful creature. Frau Sophie only waited till she had left the room to say to her daughter what was on the tip of her tongue, in order that the other guests, Timar and Katschuka, might hear. "We ought to get her used to being a servant. You know her misfortune: the money which Timar—I mean Herr von Levetincezy—saved for her was invested in an insurance company. It has failed and the money is gone. She has nothing but what she stands up in."

(So they have already brought her to beggary, thought Timar, and felt his heart lighter, like a student who is let off a year before his time.)

"It annoys me," said Athalie, "that she is so unimpressionable. You may scold her or laugh at her, it is all the same. She never blushes."

"That is a peculiarity of the Greek race," remarked Timar.

"Nonsense!" said Athalie, contemptuously.

"It is a sign of sickliness. That artificial white complexion could be attained by any school-girl who chose to eat chalk and burnt coffee-berries."

She spoke to Timar, but looked towards Herr Katschuka. He, however, was glancing at the large mirror in which one could see when Timéa came back. Athalie saw it, and it did not escape Timar's notice.

Timéa now came in, carrying a large tray of clinking glasses, her whole attention concentrated on preventing one from falling.

When Frau Sophie shrieked at her, "Take care not to drop them!" she did let the whole tray fall. Fortunately the glasses fell on the soft carpet, and did not break, but rolled about.

The mistress would have burst out in a storm, but Athalie silenced her with the words, "That was your fault; why did you scream at her? Remain here with me, Timéa; the servant shall bring the coffee."

That made Sophie angry, and she went out and brought it all in herself. But at the instant when Timéa let the glasses fall, Katschuka



with military promptitude sprang up, collected the glasses, and put them all on the tray, still held by Timéa's trembling fingers. The girl cast a grateful look on him out of her large dark eyes, which was seen by both Athalie and Timar.

"Captain Katschuka," whispered Athalie to her *fiancé*, "just for a joke make the little thing fall in love with you; pretend to pay court to her; it will be great fun. Timéa, you sup with us to-night; come and sit down here by the Captain."

This might be a cruel joke, or perhaps scornful raillery; or was it an ironical outbreak of awakened jealousy, or was it pure wickedness? We shall see what comes of it.

With feverish excitement and ill-concealed delight, the girl sat down opposite Athalie secure in conquering charms, who, while encouraging her *fiancé* to pay compliments to Timéa, did it like a queen who throws a gold piece to a beggar. The child is made happy by the gift for a day, and she herself does not feel its loss.

The Captain offered the sugar-basin to Timéa ; she could not manage the tongs.

“Take the sugar with your pretty little white hand,” said he to the girl, who was so confused that she put the lump into the tumbler instead of the coffee-cup. No one had ever told her that she had a pretty white hand. These words remained on her mind, and she looked often privately at her hands to see if they were really white and pretty. Athalie could hardly suppress a smile. She found it amusing to carry on the jest — “Timéa, offer the cakes to the Captain.”

The girl lifted the glass dish from its silver stand, and handed it to Katschuka.

“Now then, choose one for him.”

By accident she chose one in the shape of a heart. She certainly did not know that it represented a heart, nor what it meant.

“Oh, that is too much for me !” laughed the Captain ; “I can only take it if pretty Miss Timéa divides it with me.” And with that he broke the heart in two and gave part to Timéa.

The girl left it on her plate ; she would not

have eaten it for the world ! Jealously guarding it with her eyes, she did not wait till Frau Sophie or the servant should change the plates, but hastened to remove the dish of cakes herself and to vanish with them from the room. No doubt she will keep this half-heart, and it will be found in her possession. That will be droll ! There is nothing easier than to turn the head of a girl of fifteen, who takes everything in earnest and believes the first man who tells her that she has pretty hands.

And Herr Katschuka was just the man not to forgive himself if he came near a pretty girl without paying her attention. He paid court even to older women ; that he could do without scruple. But even to the housemaid, when she lighted him to the door, he could not resist paying compliments. His ambition was to make every girl's heart beat higher at the sight of his blue uniform.

Still Athalie was certain that she was the ruling planet. But it was, of course, worth his while to take a little trouble for Timéa. She was only a child ; but one could see she would

be a beauty. Then she was an orphan, and a Turkish girl, not baptised, and not quite right in her head,—all reasons for flattering her without compunction. Herr Katschuka let no chance escape him, and thereby gave great amusement to his bride.

One evening Athalie said to Timéa, as she was going to bed, “I say, Timéa, the Captain has proposed for you. Will you accept him?”

The child looked at Athalie quite frightened, ran to her couch, and drew the covering over her head, so that no one should see her.

Athalie was highly entertained that the girl could not sleep on account of these words—that she should toss restlessly on her bed, and sigh wakefully all night. The delicate jest had succeeded.

The next day Timéa was unusually quiet. She laid aside her childish manner; thoughtful melancholy lay on her features; and she became monosyllabic. The philtre had done its work.

Athalie let the whole household into the secret. They were to treat Timéa henceforward as a future bride—as the betrothed of Herr

Katschuka. The servants, the mistress, all took part in the comedy.

Let no one say this was a heathenish jest ; on the contrary, it was a Christian one.

Athalie said to Timéa—

“Here, see, the Captain has sent you an engagement ring ; but you must not put it on your finger as long as you are a heretic. You must first become a Christian. Will you be baptised ?”

Timéa crossed her hands on her breast and bowed her head.

“Then you shall be baptised first. That this may be done, you must learn the articles of faith, the catechism, the Bible history, psalms, and prayers ; you must go to the priest and to the schoolmaster to be instructed. Will you do that ?”

Timéa only nodded. And now she went every day to be taught, with her books under her arm like a little schoolgirl ; and late at night, when the rest were in bed, she went to the empty sitting-room, and sat half the night learning by heart the ten plagues of Egypt, and

the highly moral histories of Samson and Delilah, Joseph and Potiphar's wife. Learning was difficult to her, as she was not used to it. But what would she not have done to be baptised?

"You see," said Athalie, often in Timar's presence, "without this hope in her mind we should never have induced her to be converted and to study in order to be baptised."

So it was quite a pious work to turn the child's head, and make her fancy she was already betrothed. And Timar must look on at the cruel trick played on the girl without moving a finger to prevent it. What could he say? She would never understand. And his coming to the house made it worse, for it justified the fable in her eyes. She was often told that the rich Herr von Levetinczy visited them on Athalie's account, which seemed to her quite natural. The rich man woos a rich girl. They suit each other. Who should suit the poor Hungarian officer better than the poor daughter of a Turkish officer? Nothing more natural. She studied day and night, and when she had finished with the catechism and the



psalter, they found a new trick to play upon her. They said the wedding-day was fixed, but there was still much to be done to the trousseau. On account of the dresses, linen, and other details, the day could not be a very early one. And then her wedding-dress! That the bride herself must embroider. This is also a Turkish custom and suited Timéa, who knew how to work beautifully in gold and silver, for the harems are all instructed in that art.

She was given Athalie's dress, in order to execute upon it the beautiful designs which had been taught her at home. Of course they told her it was her own. Timéa drew lovely arabesques upon it, and began to embroider them. A perfect masterpiece grew under her fingers; she worked at it from early morning till late evening, and did not even lay it aside when visitors came, with whom she conversed without looking up, and that was fortunate, as then she could not see how they made fun of her. Timar, who had to look on at all this, often left the house with such bitterness in his heart that he struck the two marble pillars at

the door with all his force. He would have liked to do as Samson did, and pull the house of the Philistines down on his head.

How long will he allow it to stand?

The day to which Timéa looked forward with secret alarm was really fixed for Herr Katschuka's marriage — but with Fräulein Athalie. Only that various hindrances stood in the way of its arrival. Not in the stars, nor in the hearts of the lovers, but in the financial position of Herr Brazovics.

When the Captain asked Athanas for his daughter's hand, he told him plainly that he could only marry if the wife's dowry was sufficient to keep house upon.

Herr Brazovics made no objection. He was not going to be stingy about it: he meant to give his daughter a hundred thousand gulden on her wedding-day, and they could do as they liked with it. And at the time when he made this promise, he was in a position to carry it out. But since then Timar had put a spoke in his wheel. He had in many ways thrown Herr Brazovics's speculations into



confusion, upset his safest combinations, run him up in the corn-market, outbid him in contracts, and barred his road to influential quarters where before he had had interest, so that it was no longer possible to pay the dowry down. It was well known that his affairs were in confusion, and whoever had a claim to his money would be wise to ask for it to-day rather than to-morrow.

And Herr Katschuka was a wise man.

His future father-in-law tried to persuade him that it would be much better to leave the money at interest with him; but the Engineer would not allow his last redoubt to be taken. He charged the mines, and threatened to blow the whole marriage citadel into the air if he did not have the money down before the wedding-day.

Then a brilliant idea shot into the head of Athanas. Why not marry Athalie to Timar? The exchange would not be a bad one. It is true that he hated him and would like to poison him in a spoonful of soup. But if he married Athalie his opposition would cease, he

would be a member of the firm and have its interests at heart.

Timar comes to the house regularly—if only he were not so modest! He must be helped.

One afternoon Herr Athanas poured a double dose of anisette into his black coffee (a capital way of encouraging one's self), and had it brought into his office, giving orders that if Timar came, the ladies were to send him into his room.

There he lit his chibouque, and surrounded himself with such an atmosphere of smoke, that as he walked up and down he appeared and disappeared alternately, with his great starting bloodshot eyes, like a huge cuttle-fish lying in wait for its prey.

The prey did not keep him waiting long.

As soon as Timar heard from Frau Sophie that Athanas wished to speak to him, he hastened to his room. The great cuttle-fish swam towards him through the smoke, with his horrible fishy eyes fixed upon him, and fell upon him just like the sea-monster, whilst he cried, "Listen to me, sir; what is the mean-

ing of your visits to this house? What are your intentions with regard to my daughter?"

That is the best way to bring these poltroons to their senses; they get startled, their head swims, and before they can turn round they fall into the net of holy matrimony. It is no joke to answer such a question as that.

The first thing Timar remarked from the speech of Herr Athanas was that he had again taken too much anisette. Thence this courage.

"Sir," he replied quietly, "I have no intentions whatever with regard to your daughter. So much the less because your daughter is engaged, and the bridegroom is a good old friend of mine. I will tell you why I come to your house. If you had not asked me, I should have kept silence longer, but as you inquire I will tell you. I visit your house because I swore to your dead friend and kinsman, who came to such a dreadful end, that I would look after his orphan child. I came here to see how the orphan committed to your care was treated. She is shamefully treated, Herr Brazovics, disgracefully! I say it to your face in your own house.

You have made away with the whole of the girl's property—defrauded her ; yes, that is the word. And your whole family carries on a shameful game with the poor child. Her mind is being poisoned for her whole life. May God's curse light on you for it ! And now, Herr Brazovics, we two have met for the last time in your house, and you had better pray that you may never see the day when I come into it again."

Timar turned on his heel and slammed the door behind him. The cuttle-fish drew back into the dusky depths of its smoky lair, poured down another glass of anisette, and considered that some answer ought to have been given. But what ?

For my own part I don't know what he could have said.

Timar went back to the reception-room, not only to get his hat, which he had left there, but for something else.

In the room there was no one but Timéa ; Athalie and her *fiancé* were in the next room.

In Timar's face, flushed with anger, Timéa

saw a great change. His generally soft and gentle countenance looked proud, and was roused into emotion which made it beautiful. Many faces are beautified by passion's flame.

He went straight to Timéa, who was working golden roses and silver leaves on the bridal dress.

"Fräulein Timéa," he said to her in deeply moved tones, "I come to take leave of you. Be happy, remain a child for a long time; but if ever an hour comes in which you are unhappy, do not forget that there is some one who would—for you——"

He could not speak, his voice failed, his heart contracted. Timéa completed the interrupted phrase—"Thrice!"

He pressed her hand and stammered brokenly, "Always."

Then he bowed and went, without troubling those in the next room.

No "God be with you!" came from his lips. At this moment he was only conscious of the wish that God would withdraw his hand from this house.

Timéa let the work fall, and gazed before her, sighing again, "Thrice."

The gold thread slipped slowly out of the needle's eye.

As Timar went down the path, he came once more to the two marble pillars which supported the veranda. With what rage he struck them! Did those above feel the shock? Did not the tottering walls warn them to pray, because the roof was falling in on them?

But they were laughing at the mystified child, who worked so diligently at her wedding-dress.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

OCT 20 1927

